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Rockstar's pimped-out high roller rules the streets

DRIV3R

FIRST NO-BULL REVIEW

Hot rod or summer's biggest disappointment? Find out inside

RIPPED APART!

CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK

Vin Diesel goes for the throat in Xbox's hyper-violent bloodbath

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湾岸 MIDNIGHT CLUB 3™ DUB® edition

EXCLUSIVE! CVG brings you the drop on Rockstar's chrome-trimmed city slicker

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CVG IN NUMBERS

NUMBER OF GAMES	NUMBER OF SCREENS	GAMES RATED	ASS-LICKING REVIEWS
415	819	78	0

DRIV3R REVIEWED PLUS A FAT LOAD MORE INSIDE!

COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES
CVG
AUGUST 2004 ISSUE

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We've read your minds and we know you're interested in this psi-cho shooter – or at least you will be when you've read our mind-bending preview

52 **Silent Hill 4**
Konami's messed with the formula *and* our pants. More action, less suspense, but still more atmosphere than a haunted pressure cooker

YOU READY FOR THE HIGH LIFE?

Souped-up Corsas plastered with tacky decals are out. Topless slappers draped over the bonnet? Nice pair love, but we want something with a bit more style.

That's why we're busting our big ends over MC3: DUB Edition. We'd rather cruise in a tricked-out Hummer, which is why Mike flew to NY to score a world's first look at Rockstar's pimped-out high roller. He loved it so much he's rigged up his Fiesta with air suspension. Not quite a $250k Escalade but hey, you gotta start somewhere...

Alex Simmons

Alex Simmons *Editor*

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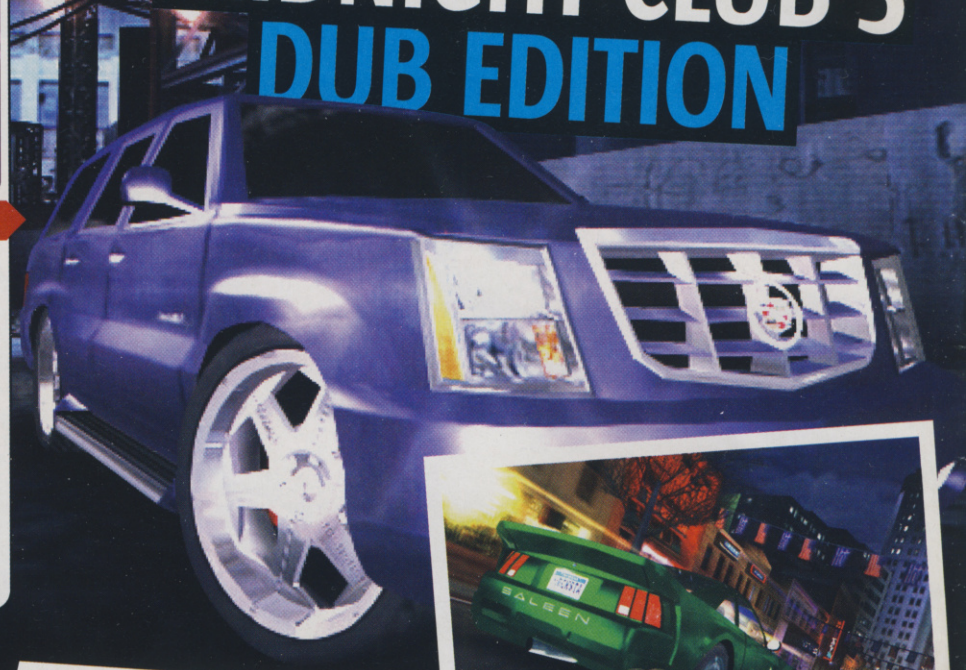
MIDNIGHT CLUB 3 DUB EDITION



"TRICKED OUT, HIGH ROLLIN' AND PACKING MORE ATTITUDE THAN FIDDY CENT"

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CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK

"ESCAPE FROM BUTCHER BAY IS SMARTER THAN YOUR AVERAGE MOVIE TIE-IN"

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RESIDENT EVIL 4

"THE DARK LORD OF SURVIVAL HORROR HAS HAD A FULL LOOKS AND PERSONALITY MAKEOVER"

ON THE COVER

the team

ON THE FRONTLINES OF THE VIDEOGAME WAR THIS MONTH:

Alex Simmons **Editor**
Swanked off to Portugal for the France/England clash. Shame he had to go poo-poo in the 90th minute.

Pete Walker **Managing Editor**
Poutey Pete's been sick. It was a cold he told us, as he sat in his back garden 'recovering' in the 35° heat.

Mike Cooper **News Editor**
Mike doesn't talk to us anymore. He spends his time rappin' with his Rockstar buddies in Noo Yoik.

Graeme Boyd **Staff Writer**
Grazza's pissed off 'cos he only got to go to Sweden instead of NY. Or maybe his piles are playing up again.

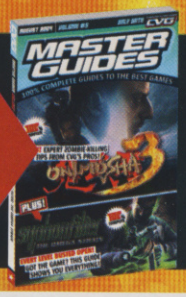
Paul Davies **Contributing Ed**
See that smug look on Paul's face? That's 'cos he 'had' to spend the month playing WE7 International.

Jaime Smith **Art Editor**
If you see Jaime hitching a ride, hide. He may look all smiley and nice here, but he eats manflesh.

Kris Barratt **Senior Designer**
Jaime's new right-hand man is a fully signed-up rock and roll star. No, honest. Groupies apply here.

Mike Newson **Design Troll**
Guess who shot to the top of CVG's Most Hated list after winning £160 from France beating England 2-1?

IN THE BOOKS

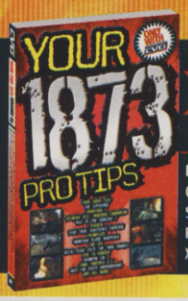


MASTER GUIDES #5

100% COMPLETE GUIDES TO THE BEST GAMES

ONIMUSHA 3: DEMON SIEGE
- Everything you need to know to kick demon ass back to hell

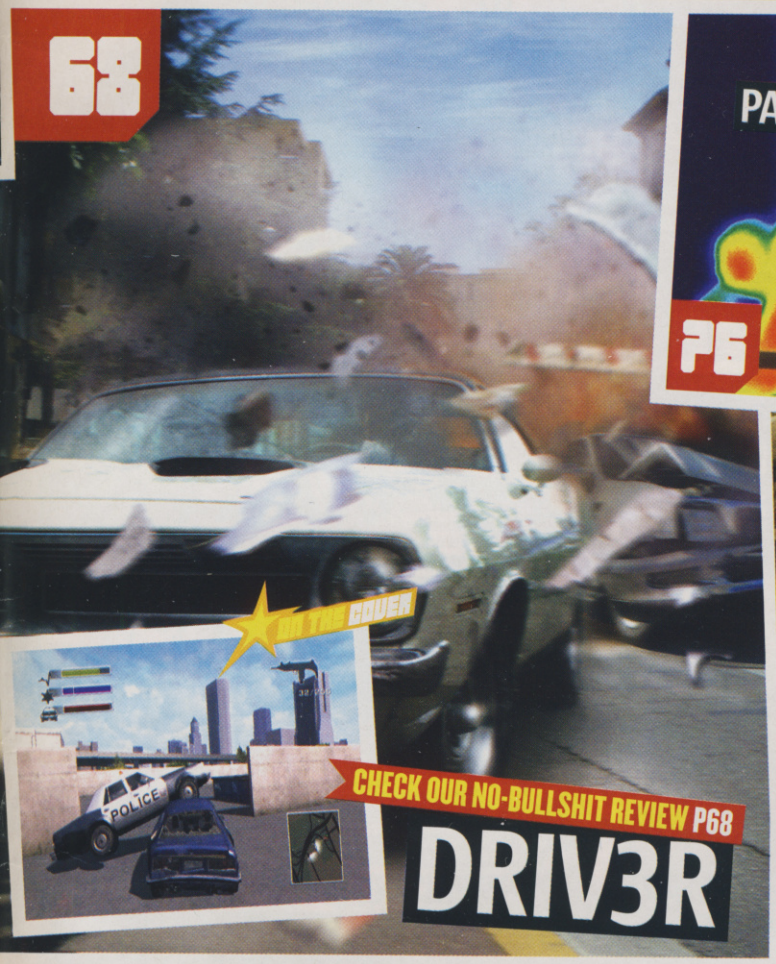
SYPHON FILTER: OMEGA STRAIN
- All missions busted open so you can sneak to victory with ease



YOUR PRO TIPS #5

BUSTIN' TIPS FOR THOUSANDS OF GAMES!

- Fight Night 2004
- The Suffering
- Onimusha 3
- Splinter Cell 2
- Disgaea
- Way Of The Samurai 2
- Star Trek: Shattered Universe
- Onimusha Blade Warriors
- Painkiller
- Far Cry
- Rise To Honour
- MGS: Twin Snakes
- Final Fantasy X-2
- Rainbow Six 3
- Need For Speed Underground



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FLIP IT FOR THE RED HOT SCOOP

TURN OVER NOW!

Wanna see all the latest on San Andreas? Sidle on over to the next page. Or maybe you want more on DMC3, next-gen systems or just wanna check the charts. Planet CVG has got the lot.

planet cvg

HOT NEWS & GAMING GOSSIP FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

HAIRCUTS AND GRASS CUTTERS

Last month's E3 was a global games orgy with every developer and publisher blowing its load in one shot. Most are still recovering but Rockstar and Konami have fed us more white-hot info on all their upcoming monster titles.

There's a wee game called GTA: San Andreas that we're quite excited about, and we've got a whole gang-load of new facts and details of the haircuts you can get. Yup, haircuts. If you don't look good, you can't run the 'hood.

And with Euro 2004 fading into memory, we were delighted to get a good look at Winning Eleven 8. I don't need to tell you how much we love Konami's footie-fest and we're digging WE8's new features. But there's more – we still managed to get Capcom to dribble some fresh DMC3 screens and hooked up with EA for some smooth NFS Underground 2 shots.Woof. Even a quiet news month is still packed to the rafters at CVG!

Mike Cooper

Mike Cooper *News Editor*

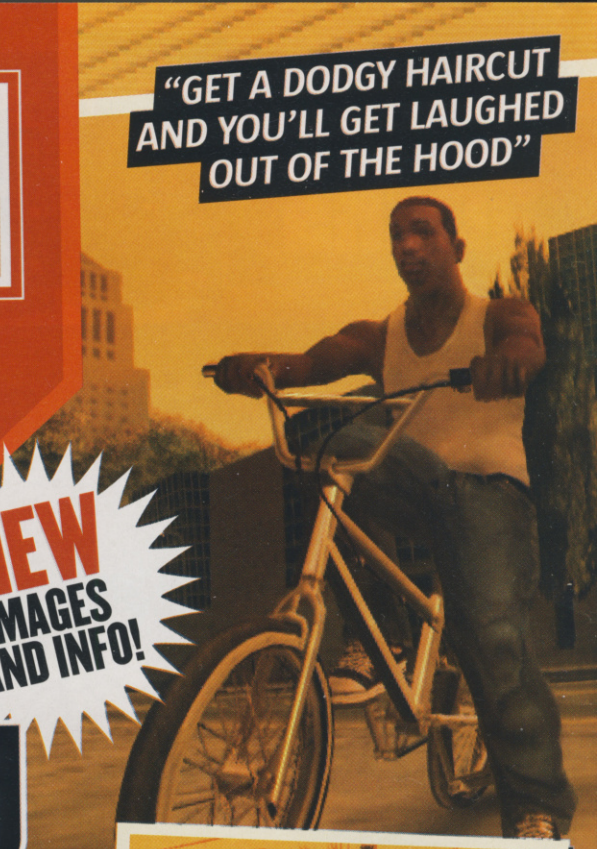
this month...

08 DEVIL MAY CRY 3 Go back to the start of Dante's story with the new DMC

08 THUG 2 Going back underground with Tony and his skate cronies

10 NEED FOR SPEED U2 Shiny new pics of EA's big-money street racer. Tune!

13 OKAMI It looks a bit weird but it's made by Inaba so it's cool



"GET A DODGY HAIRCUT AND YOU'LL GET LAUGHED OUT OF THE HOOD"

grand theft auto SanAndreas

NEW IMAGES AND INFO!

ON THE DOWNLOW!

You'll be able to hide from the cops by ducking down shadowy alleys and onto dark porches like in Manhunt

MORE ROCK-SOLID FACTS ON R-STAR'S GHETTO-FABULOUS GANG BANGER

We were still drooling over last month's hot new San Andreas pics and info when another bunch smashed through the office window like Rockstar had just performed a detail drive-by on us.

San Andreas is made up of three cities and all the countryside in between – that's six times bigger than Vice City. It's already shaping up to be the biggest and most complex PS2 game ever, and every new nugget of info makes it sound even cooler.

We told you about how eating too much fast food would turn your belly into the Notorious B.I.G., right? Well it seems that your image is going to be extremely important in the game, 'cos not only do you need to stay trim, your hair needs to look smooth. Get a dodgy cut and you'll get laughed out of the 'hood, but style it up with fades and cornrows and you'll command respect.

More gameplay elements have emerged too, like Manhunt-style stealth and crazy-assed cops who'll do anything to bring you down, including hanging onto your motor as you speed off. There'll also be more opportunity than ever to develop your own crime empire by controlling whole neighbourhoods.

The countryside between the three cities will be full of farms, forests and deserts, and, get this, there'll be a HALF-MILE-HIGH mountain to scale. We're imagining the insane Stunt Bonuses you're gonna get with that right now...

We're serious: if Rockstar follows through on all this stuff San Andreas could be one of the most accomplished, most exciting, most impressive games ever. More news next month. ✷

PIMPIN' AND CRIMPIN'

San Andreas isn't just about acting gangsta - you've got to look the part too. Here's some of the hairstyles you'll be able to give CJ.

FLAT-TOP Keep it clean, keep it cool with a smooth and tidy fade-up to a ruler-straight flat-top

BALD For some true OG-stylin' you gotta take the whole lot off and bust out the bald head

CORNROWS Time to flash your gangsta style with tightly-woven cornrows and tramlines

The undead chase you with terrifying speed and cling onto your motor like dead flies

DEAD RUSH

GTA MEETS RESI EVIL IN ACTIVISION'S MOTORISED SURVIVAL HORROR!

Judging by the suggestions we got from you lot about things you'd like to see in San Andreas, we'd say you like zombies. Zombies and cars. So you're going to go mental for Dead Rush, out on Xbox, PS2, GameCube and PC next year.

You wake up in the earthquake-ravaged city of East Port to find the tremors have awoken millions of undead creatures. Bugger, eh? You'll have to explore the city on foot or in cars, find fellow survivors, and blast the undead back to hell.

Enemies range from shambling man zombies to massive great fekkin' undead dogs who'll ferociously leap onto your car's roof, rip it clean off and chew your head to moosh before you've even managed to unbuckled your seatbelt.

We loved the look of Dead Rush at E3, and if it plays well it could be the ultimate antidote to slow survival horror games.

NEWS NUGGETS

UNMISSABLE BITE-SIZED STORIES FROM ALL OVER THE PLANET

WARNER BROS SAYS 'CUT!' TO BAD MOVIE LICENCES

You'll never play a bad movie licensed game again if Jason Hall, boss of Warner Bros Interactive has his way. He plans to punish developers whose games review badly with higher royalty payments in an attempt to stop dodgy tie-ins harming movie brands.

DOA ULTIMATE: NORKS CONFIRMED

Ah, fit girls bouncing around in skimpy swimwear. Every character who appeared in DOAX will have a secret swimsuit costume in Dead Or Alive Ultimate, so we can carry on looking at them without feeling too lonely...

KOEI LINE-UP SLICES ASS

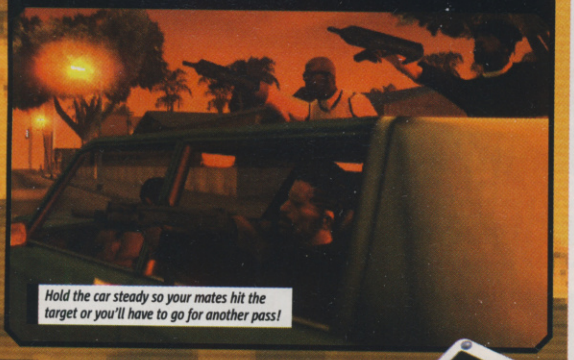
Not content with dropping the killer Crimson Sea 2 (see page 14) on us, KOEI is gearing up to unleash Samurai Warriors on Xbox and Dynasty Warriors IV Empires on PS2. Both are due in September so look out for more info next month.

Here's a better look at CJ on his BMX in front of LA's Convention Centre – or at least, Los Santos's version of it

ON A MISSION

Our informers still don't have the full drop on San Andreas's missions, but a couple of details have leaked out.

Escaping from airport police on a BMX bike could be the first mission, and we've heard rumours of another mission where you're at the wheel while your mates carry out a brutal drive-by.

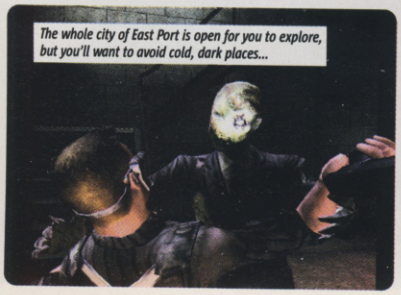


Hold the car steady so your mates hit the target or you'll have to go for another pass!

CRIME IN YOUR POCKET

Good news for crime-hungry GBA players (and who isn't one?) 'cos Rockstar has resurrected the legendary off/on portable GTA game.

Don't expect full 3D graphics or anything on the scale of Vice City or San Andreas, but we've always thought the GBA would be perfect for an old-skool, top-down GTA game along the lines of 1 and 2. Plus, imagine jacking a bus while you're on a bus? Cool...



The whole city of East Port is open for you to explore, but you'll want to avoid cold, dark places...

The visuals look more natural. The shirts flow nicely and Rooney looks a full-on Shrek head

WORLD SOCCER Winning Eleven 8

JAP PRO EVO ABOUT TO KICK OFF THE ULTIMATE FOOTIE MATCH

We're a bit bored with Pro Evo you know. We can't really even be bothered to play it anymore.

That was, of course, a big fat lie. We love Pro Evo more than anything, we play it every morning, lunchtime and evening, and we're very proud to support the UK Pro Evo League.

That's why we've been busting our goalsacks over the first images and information on Winning Eleven 8, hitting our eyeballs like a Zidane free kick. In extra time.

If you don't know the score, Winning Eleven is the Japanese version of Pro Evo. Released in Japan on August 5, it usually shows off all the features we can expect, both from October's UK PS2 release of Pro Evo 4 and the Xbox version announced in March.

Before all the tasty stuff, a moment of silence please. Online play in Pro Evo 4, at least on PS2, is dead. It's rumoured that the Xbox version WILL support online multiplayer, which will undoubtedly leave long-time PS2 Pro Evo fans sick as a parrot.

New pass control will let you place the ball right on your striker's boot

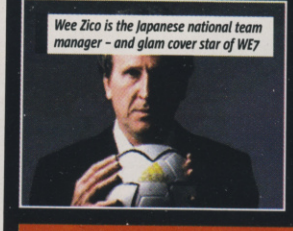
THANKS FOR THE MEMORY

How cool? Japanese Pro Evo fans even get their own branded memory card for all their Master League teams.

Still, there's plenty to get excited about. On the most superficial level the frankly awful menu system has been dropped from the team and replaced by a young, attractive upstart.

But the most important action's out on the pitch and WE8's going to expand on Winning Eleven 7 International's improved ball physics and snappier player control with a whole bag of new tricks and skills.

You'll need a Japanese or chipped PlayStation 2 to play Winning Eleven 8 but don't worry – we'll be giving Konami's footie superstar a trial with the CVG team very soon and bringing you all the details.



Wee Zico is the Japanese national team manager – and glam cover star of WE7

CHECK THE FACTS!

The facts are screaming in like goals at a five-a-side match. Kick these little babies:

1 FOOTBALL FACTORY

Players in Master League, both in your team and in AI-controlled teams, will develop their abilities in a more realistic way. And if you leave a player on the bench his skills will drain away!

2 OLÈ!

The right analog stick tricks will be fleshed out with new flashy moves like ankle-snapping stopovers, feints and fancy flicks. Watch out, though – the defensive AI has been beefed up!

3 PLAYING DIRTY

Kits will show the effects of the match, with grass and mud stains appearing on shorts and shirts, FIFA-style. Hopefully there'll be some Terry Butcher-style blood-soakings, too.

4 GETTING CROSS

Expect loads more attacking options thanks to a new arsenal of crosses, through balls, and bullet passes. Konami wants to give you complete control over where you place the ball.

5 SQUAD LIST

People always moan about Pro Evo's lack of real player names. Winning Eleven 8 looks like it'll have more accurate names than ever before, with loads of official licences promised.

6 DEAD BALL DYNAMITE

Free kicks and dead balls are promised a makeover, too. You'll be able to put together complex set pieces with run-overs, nifty dummies, lay-offs and quick free kicks.

7 CLUBBIN' TOGETHER

The Master League roster has been expanded from 64 to 138 teams with official licences promised for teams from England, Spain, Italy, England, France and Holland.

8 SHOOT THE REF

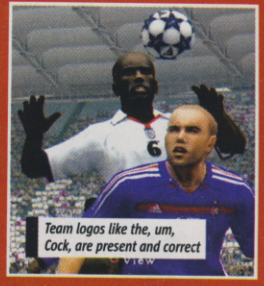
For the first time in the series the man in black will appear on the pitch during play. We're not convinced about this – games like FIFA and TIF do this and it's a bit daft, but it does add to the realism.

LICENSED TO THRILL?

Ever wondered what Pro Evo would look like with all the official players, kits and licences? Well, a bit like those screens there, actually.

We should point out, for the record, that these shots come from a highly illegal hacked version of Winning Eleven 7 International that's not endorsed by Konami.

But what they do show is just how awesome the best footie game on the planet could look with all the licences secured. Make it happen, Konami!



Team logos like the, um, Cock, are present and correct

Check out the detail on the sponsors' logos!

NEW FIFA 2005 SHOTS

EA's championship contender boasts tons of new features, including more instant controls, less intrusive animations, and First Touch, where you can kill the ball, pass it instantly, or knock it into space for some Olé-style skill moves. Nice!

Hot or Not?

MIDNIGHT CLUB 3

Car modding like they do it in the States. Think phat-ass hip-hop rides like off Cribs, think over-the-top customisation like off Pimp My Ride, think screaming through free-roaming city streets at speeds you've never imagined. Sweet.

FOOTBALL

Winning Eleven 7 International on our PS2s, Champ Manager 03/04 on our PCs, Euro 2004 on the telly, kick-abouts down the park. It's official – football is the best thing ever!

N-GAGE QD

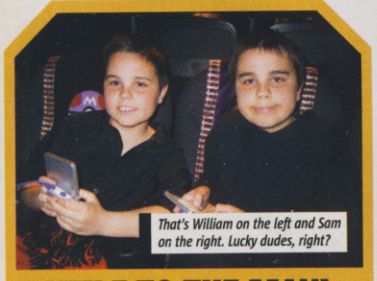
Shock news: the new N-Gage design is actually pretty good. It's smaller, lighter, looks cooler, and doesn't make you look like a total fanny when you make phonecalls. Get our full verdict on page 14.

NEXT-GEN CONNECTIVITY

Sony's Cell technology and Microsoft's Windows-based connectivity means you'll be able to link all your entertainment appliances together, but does that mean we can only have one console?

DRIV3R

A short, badly scripted story mode with frustrating missions, some nice visuals stunk up by shocking pop-up, huge, empty cities that lack any of Vice City's soul, and some abysmal on-foot stuff. The driving's still fun, but Driv3r is the disappointment of the year.



That's William on the left and Sam on the right. Lucky dudes, right?

BATTLE TO THE MAX!

If you're a regular CVG reader you'll know we hook you up with the best compo prizes, period. Just ask our mate William Savage – he won our Pokémon Colosseum competition in CVG 272 and got the chance to play the game on an absolutely massive IMAX cinema screen at the UK Pokémon Battlemaster Tournament 2004.

"This is the best experience of my life!" said William as he sat down to battle his brother Sam. After an intense conflict, master trainer William emerged as the winner and told us, "I've proved I'm among the best Pokémon trainers in the UK!"

The tournament was won by ten-year-old Will Stacey from Colchester with his squad of Rayqauza, Metagross, Jirachi and Kyogre. We forgot our cart, or we'd 'ave 'ad 'im, honest.

ROYAL GUARD

Royal Guard skills let you unleash devastating counters on your opponents

GUNSLINGER

Handy with your shooters? Concentrate on Gunslinger skills for long-range accuracy and crowd control

SWORD MASTER

SCREENSHOT BLITZ!

Old-school hack 'n' slasher? Concentrating on your blade skills will develop your close-up melee skills to the point where you can dice demons like carrots!

DEVIL MAY CRY 3

AN UNHOLY COVEN OF SCORCHING NEW SCREENS FROM CAPCOM'S SUPER-STYLISH SLASHER!

Last month we brought you all the fresh info on Devil May Cry 3 from E3, but even we weren't prepared for the barrage of razor-sharp screens that Capcom unleashed on us!

We told you that DMC3 is actually a prequel to the action of the first two games, and that now you get to choose how you want to develop Dante's skills. These screenshots show the four different skill sets in action – check them out and choose which one suits your style of devilish demon-dicing best!

We're also loving the neon-soaked visual style that seems to be pulling together influences from Darkness-style cock rock, Hollywood horror movies, and, er, disco music. Murder on the dancefloor? You bet your Diesel-clad ass there'll be!

TRICKSTER

So, you like to take the mick? Developing your Trickster skills means you'll be able to run rings around your opponents with over-the-top acrobatic moves!

GOIN' DEEPER UNDERGROUND

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2 TAGS US WITH SPRAY PAINT-STAINED NEW SCREENS

The environments look a lot more colourful than THUG's drab grittiness

We didn't dig THUG all that much. The idea was cool, but it came off more like Wackass than Jackass far too often.

So it's really cool to see THUG 2 looking so good. It seems the mistakes made in the first THUG game won't be repeated: the cars have been dumped and a Classic timed mode has been added to the story mode. Sounds promising.

New moves? You betcha. Our faves are the Natas Spin, a circular spin you can bust out on fire hydrants, and the wicked Spazz Out, which lets you kick your board like a mentalist!

Even cooler, nail a huge combo and you'll go into Focus mode where everything goes all Matrix as you rack up the big scores. Gotta love slo-mo.

"IT SEEMS THE MISTAKES MADE IN THE FIRST GAME WON'T BE REPEATED"

VIRTUA STRIKER 4 SCORES ON CUBE?

Sega's fast and furious arcade footie experience is getting a new arcade version developed on the Triforce board, the hardware developed by Nintendo, Sega and Namco that ran F-Zero AX. We'd bet our balls that a GameCube exclusive version will follow.

THIS MONTH'S BEST RUMOUR

Fancy a bit of Halo on the move? Seems everyone does, but Bungie has stamped out half-arsed rumours that it was bringing the legendary FPS to GBA. Oh well.

RE-ENTER THE MATRIX

Atari has revealed another couple of Matrix games are in the making. The second in the trilogy, which was (wrongly!) rumoured to be unveiled at E3, is heading for PS2, Xbox and PC, while the final outing is a next-gen project.

MAX Drive sticks straight into your PS2 USB port or your Xbox controller port

MEMORY TO THE MAX

USB MEMORY UNIT REVOLUTIONISES SAVED GAMES!

How annoying is it when you save your game only to be told your memory card's full? Or when you get a new game and can't access all the cool unlockables?

Well, Datel's new MAX Drive should ensure you never feel those frustrations again. We're well impressed with this bit of kit, available for both Xbox and PS2.

Basically it's a 16MB (twice the size of a standard PS2 card) memory unit that slots into your PS2's USB port or one of your Xbox controller ports. You can save game files onto the card and then transfer them to your PC for some truly efficient storage.

But here's the kicker: if you go to Datel's CodeJunkies server you can download saved games onto your MAX Drive over the internet! Imagine unlocking everything Gotham 2 or NFS: Underground has to offer instantly – sweet or what? All that, and it's only £19.99 on both PS2 and Xbox. This little baby's gonna be big...

SCOOP SOME CRACKING .HACK: MUTATION PRIZES

We're big fans of .hack's crazy offline/online adventuring in The World, so we were well chuffed when our mates at Atari offered us some more quality prizes to give away.

We gave .hack Mutation a phat 76% in CVG 274, and here's your chance to win the game, a PS2 to play it on, and an absolute stack of limited edition .hack toys. Two runners-up will get a copy of the game and some toys.

All you've got to do is answer this easy question:

What is the name of .hack's fictional online role-playing game?

A. The World
B. The Turd
C. The Bird

Answers to: .hack Competition, CVG, Dennis Publishing, 9 Dallington Street, London, EC1V 0BQ before August 1. See page 110 for terms and conditions.

NEXT GEN NEWS

ALWAYS KEEPING YOU IN THE KNOW

PLAYSTATION PORTABLE (PSP)

■ Sony's handheld could cost as much as $500 (£275), according to Atari's chief Bruno Bonnell. He also complained about the way Sony was keeping developers in the dark over PSP's capabilities.

NINTENDO DS

■ Nintendo has trademarked nine acronyms that might be the official name for DS. Take your pick: DGB, EGB, GBD, GBE, GBN, TGB, WGB, XGBM. Any ideas?

■ Nintendo confirmed eight titles likely to make up DS's launch range: Super Mario 64 x 4, New Super Mario Bros., Metroid: Hunters, WarioWare DS, Mario Kart: DD DS, Animal Crossing DS, Nintendogs and PictoChat.

■ Finally, Nintendo bigwig designer Kenichi Sugino mentioned that porting N64's superb Ocarina Of Time to DS could be done "very easily." Oh. My. God.

PLAYSTATION 3 (PS3)

■ Sony CEO Noboyuki Idei has indicated that the Cell processor that will be the PS3's engine will be present in Sony TVs from 2006. You'll be able to surf the net and control other Cell devices like your PS3 and Sony stereo from the TV!

XBOX 2 (CODENAME: XENON)

■ Xbox 2 could be built around PC architecture, according to info from an American market research company. The unit, codenamed Xbox Next PC, would play Xbox 2 and PC games, run Windows, and come equipped with a CD burner.

■ As mentioned elsewhere in Planet CVG, Ninja Gaiden developers Team Ninja is working on sequel – but since the developer's release schedule is busy through 2005, Gaiden 2 might have to wait for Xbox 2's next-gen power.

N5 (GC NEXT GEN)

■ Miyamoto's investigating whether Nintendo's next gen machine might be the ideal machine for Mario's long-awaited all-new outing, Mario 128.

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COVENTRY UNIVERSITY

in Big Japan

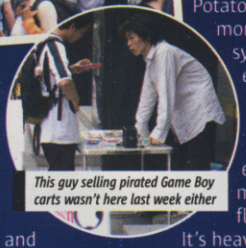
SOME KNOW IT AS ELECTRIC CITY, OTHERS AS AKIHABARA... WELCOME TO HEAVEN ON EARTH

Once you discover the world of Japanese games, you'll hear about it. Akihabara! The world's gaming mecca.

Akihabara is Tokyo's games district and it's better than E3, Tokyo Games Show and ECTS rolled into one. It's so popular that major four-lane streets are closed to vehicles every Sunday just to cope with the crowds. It's a dozen blocks of every game you've ever wanted, for every system every made, and it's never the same place twice.

Taito's S@Y arcade – this wasn't here last week!

A weekday crowd checks out a new demo on the street



This guy selling pirated Game Boy carts wasn't here last week either

It's only been three weeks since my last visit, and everything's changed. One of my favourite stores has closed and Taito has somehow built a second arcade 250m from the first (in less time than it takes me to grow stubble).

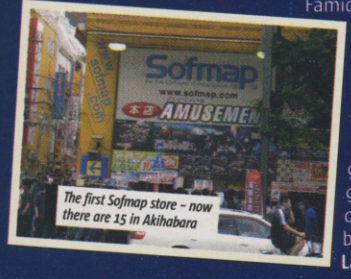
In Japan new trends can spread like wildfire, and that's especially true in Akihabara. For a few weeks in February, PlayStation-programmable joysticks were all the rage. Demand spiked and prices climbed to over 33,000 Yen (£165 – no joke) for a device that sold for 2,200 Yen (£11) the week before. Just as suddenly the demand died, prices returned to a more reasonable range, and shops with high price tags are avoided.

RETRO MAGIC

Then there's retro gaming. It's always been huge in Akihabara shops. There's a new shop called Super Potato which stocks more retro gaming systems than every game store in the UK – PC Engine Duos, Neo Geos, and every imaginable machine stacked floor to ceiling. It's heaven. There are 40 game stores just like Super Potato within a few blocks of each other, and every week they've got new stuff in stock. It's insane!

Everything happens fast here. When Nintendo ceased production of their AV Famicom (the Japanese NES) late last year, every store in Akihabara sold out at the same time, within hours of the announcement! And in their place three different Famicom clones from China appeared as if by magic. Shazaam! You buy what you can when you can, because it will be gone tomorrow...

The pulse of the gaming world is hard to gauge, but there's no question where its heart beats: Akihabara! **Lawrence**



The first Sofmap store – now there are 15 in Akihabara

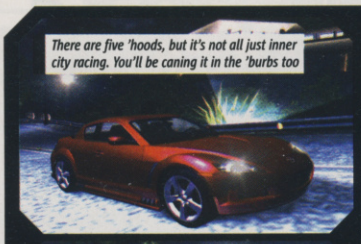
PS2: HARD DISK HEAVEN!

The HD Loader lets you download all your PS2 games onto most hard disks – not just Sony's 40GB official unit! This means super-short loading times. Some games though, including online titles, still have to run off the game disc. The HD Loader costs about 20 quid.

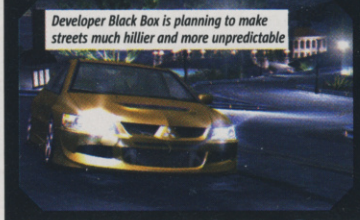
NINJA GAIDEN 2

Developer Team Ninja has confirmed that it will develop a sequel to Ninja Gaiden, probably the slickest ninja game ever made. But it's only planned for release in 2005/6! Could mean Xbox 2?

UPDATE!



There are five 'hoods, but it's not all just inner city racing. You'll be caning it in the 'burbs too



Developer Black Box is planning to make streets much hillier and more unpredictable

Once you discover things in the city they'll be marked on your in-game map

NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2

EA'S NITRO-STUFFED STREET RACER GOES OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

EA's stolen a leaf out of Midnight Club's roadmap and taken the free-roaming racer route with NFS Underground 2.

Executive producer Chuck Osieja has gone on the record to boast that Underground 2 is "roughly about three times the size of the Underground city, with probably two to three times the density in terms of streets." He went on to add, "It's not going to be all neon and wet streets this year. We'll have things like real-time weather in the game, so it'll rain and the streets will actually get wet and then get dry and those things will affect the way the cars handle."

NFS Underground 2 hits the shelves in the UK this November.

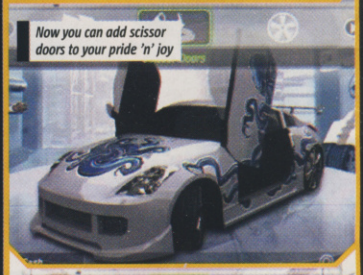
No races take place during the day. It's all dusk till dawn racing

You won't be able to access all five 'hoods immediately. Areas need to be unlocked

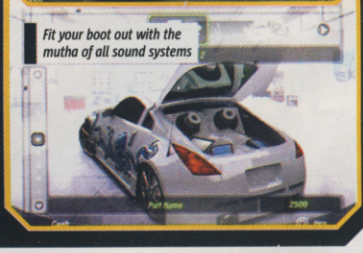
YOU LITTLE TINKER!

EA has chucked in some new customisation options, enabling you to give your motor the Max Power-style treatment.

All you need now to be a proper boy racer is a knocked-off Kappa tracksuit and a dirty slapper on your arm! Pink or brown, luv?



Now you can add scissor doors to your pride 'n' joy



Fit your boot out with the mutha of all sound systems

First look

There'll be loads of new battlefields to wage bloody war in, stretching from deserts to seaside retreats

TURF WAR!

DYNASTY WARRIORS RETURNS FOR MORE ANCIENT ASS-KICKIN'!

KOEI has blabbed that Dynasty Warriors 4: Empires will be slicing its way onto PS2 this September.

Developer Omega Force has expanded the DW universe with new smaller kingdoms added. The fresh Character Edit mode now offers three times as many warrior models and voices to choose from. Plus custom characters can now also use any weapon that appears in the game! As for the Versus mode, you can use the new Summon feature to send attacking forces onto your enemy's screen. Check out next month's Incoming for the first razor-sharp preview.

THREE FOR PSP!

As well as confirming a Dynasty Warriors game for the launch of PSP, KOEI has now announced that it'll be developing a 'strategy game' and a 'board game' for Sony's ultra slick palm-pleaser. We'll keep you posted!

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CVG GOLD AWARD

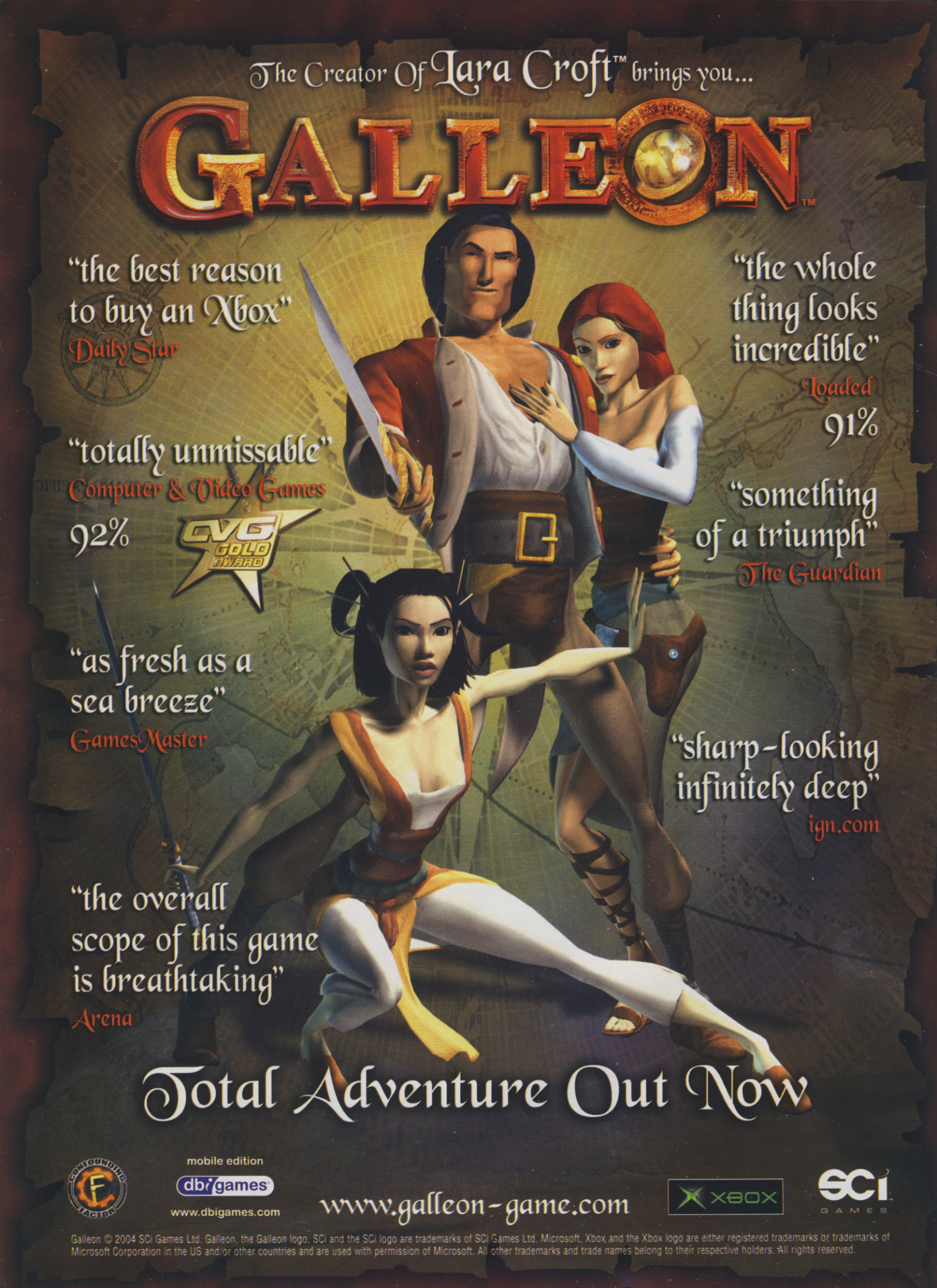
"as fresh as a sea breeze"
GamesMaster

"the overall scope of this game is breathtaking"
Arena

"the whole thing looks incredible"
Loaded
91%

"something of a triumph"
The Guardian

"sharp-looking infinitely deep"
ign.com



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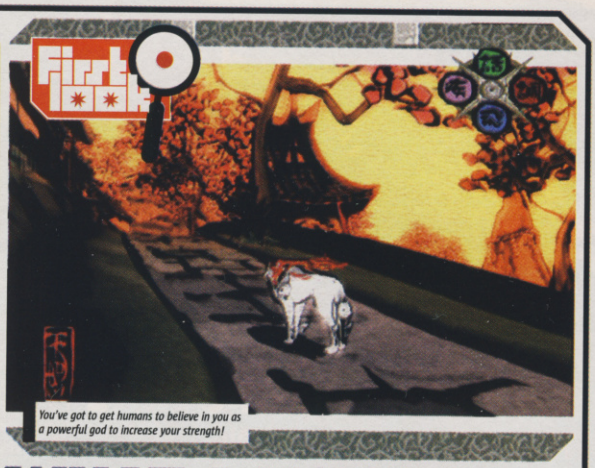
THE MARIO MYSTERY

Miyamoto recently revealed that Nintendo is still to decide whether Mario 128 will be released for Cube or Nintendo DS. Tests are still being run to see which platform it'll be most suited to. An answer is expected very soon, so stay tuned.

PSP'S THE ONE FOR ME

Developer Planet Moon, most famous for Armed & Dangerous, has announced that it's planning to develop games solely for Sony's PSP from now on! Its first game is a third-person actioner called Infected (working title).

We're not sure why Amaterasu has flames streaming off him. Must be his fiery temper



First look

You've got to get humans to believe in you as a powerful god to increase your strength!

As in Viewtiful Joe, all the characters in Okami are startlingly original and quirky-looking

WHAT A HOWLER!

CAPCOM'S CLOVER STUDIO UNVEILS ITS FIRST ORIGINAL TITLE EXCLUSIVELY FOR PS2

FROM THE CREATOR OF VIEWTIFUL JOE

Clover is a new internal development studio at Capcom being helmed by oddball genius Atsushi Inaba – the fella responsible for off-the-wall classics like Viewtiful Joe and Steel Battalion!

The first game to be squeezed out of Clover's creative bowels is Okami, and it sounds every bit as brilliantly barmy as any of Inaba's previous efforts.

You play a mythical sun god called Amaterasu who transforms himself into a wolf with a view to saving a drab and colourless world by defeating evil monsters. Every time you savage a foe the world regains a driblet of colour, with landscapes and characters progressively becoming more vibrant.

Also, you have to interact with humans and fulfil their wishes by completing objectives. When you fulfil a wish, the people have more faith in you, and the more faith you acquire the stronger and more powerful a wolf god you become!

We love what Clover's done with the visuals. It looks like an awesome ancient Japanese painting – everything is styled with an amazing watercolour look and highlighted with striking black calligraphy outlines. Again, Inaba has cooked up a game that looks unbelievable and unlike any other!

When you enter a battle scenario the camera swings around behind yo' ass

The whole screen looks dappled and grainy, like a piece of watercolour paper

"AGAIN, INABA HAS COOKED UP A GAME THAT LOOKS UNBELIEVABLE AND UNLIKE ANY OTHER!"

Supernatural creatures lurk around every colourful corner

Looks like Amaterasu's gearing up to unleash an almighty howl from the cliff tops

From what we can tell the action switches between 2D and 3D fighting sections, and with Inaba's expertise for original gameplay ideas we're expecting amazing things. Capcom's yet to announce a launch date for Okami, so keep 'em peeled for more details and developments next month.

the HOT SEAT

CVG talks exclusively to Kazunori Yamauchi about Gran Turismo 4 on PlayStation 2 and PSP!

CVG: Is it difficult to relax with such high expectations from GT4's many fans?

KAZUNORI: *Although I seem to have very little time to myself with the busy development schedule, I do occasionally find the time to go out and drive a car in real life out on the highways of Tokyo. Those are the times when I can relax, forget about work and just enjoy the time spent behind the wheel.*

CVG: What do you think will be judged the single greatest achievement of Gran Turismo 4?

KAZUNORI: *It's a difficult question because I always aim for over 100 per cent in all aspects of any game I create. However, if I had to pick one I would have to say the actual driving simulation is its greatest achievement.*

CVG: With the next generation of technology almost upon us, how do you hope to use that to push the envelope of the driving genre?

KAZUNORI: *Let's take the category of car physics: currently in GT4 on the PS2, the calculations for car physics are done 60 times a second, the same as the frame rate. But with the next generation coming and higher specifications, we think this could change to 300 times per second or even 600 times per second.*

Those changes will be significant in how players relate to car physics, car simulation and feedback. Another aspect is the graphics: in terms of GT4 it's nice, it's very pretty – for a game. But again in the next generation the target will obviously be to bring that to another stage, another step, where it will be prettier than reality.

Take, for example, the environment and atmosphere seen in the Grand Canyon course. There are times when you see the same scenery with perfect lighting – maybe only once in 100 years do you see something like that in reality. We have the advantage of being able to provide that in a virtual world, and that supercedes reality in those terms. We hope to recreate a very beautiful atmosphere with the advantages of next-generation technology.

"I ALWAYS AIM FOR OVER 100 PER CENT IN ANY GAME I CREATE"

CVG: What do you think of the PSP and the possibility of bringing the GT series onto it?

KAZUNORI: *I'm very intrigued by the PSP itself as an object. It's very intriguing – very appealing. Of course, I would hope to release Gran Turismo 4 on PSP as soon as possible, but at the same time at full specification. What I don't want to do is lower the specification or remove features to fit it onto a handheld. I want to make sure it's a full-specification GT4 on a handheld console.*

CVG: Are you confident that can be achieved?

KAZUNORI: *Currently, yes.*

"I WOULD RELEASE GT4 ON PSP, BUT ONLY IF IT'S AT FULL SPEC"

CVG: Finally, many have tried to recreate the success of the GT series but they have failed to live up to its extremely high standards. What is the secret of your success?

KAZUNORI: *I can't be sure; it's a difficult question. But the team and I have always concentrated on improvements, always constant improvements, and this has been carried forward with GT4. It's been ten years now and I think this has grown to a state where the constant aim to improve has become a natural feature of the team. That may be the answer.*

CVG: But you still love cars, even after all this time?

KAZUNORI: *I think that might in fact be the real answer to your previous question! [laughs]*

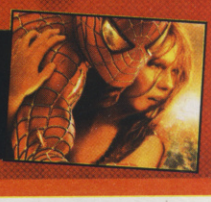
ONE IN THE EYETOY FOR NINTENDO?

Nintendo has trademarked the names 'Manebito/Camera', 'Ningen Copy/Manebito', and 'Commanderpack'. We reckon the Manebito stuff could be an EyeToy-style Cube camera, and 'Commanderpack'? The smart money's on a voice activated microphone peripheral.

人間コピー まねビト

ACTIVISION CAUGHT IN THE WEB

Spider-Man 2's not even out yet and already Activision has announced that it'll be handling the Spider-Man 3 games. The movie's due out in May 2007, so chances are the game will make its nest on the next-gen consoles.



Playtime Bullies

FIGHTING FOR SPACE ON CVG'S CONSOLES THIS MONTH

PS2 MOST PLAYED!

Winning Eleven 7 International
International's refined ball physics and looser player control is getting us ready for WE8. With footie on TV and this little baby hogging the PS2 there's not a minute goes by when we don't have balls on the brain.

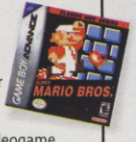
XBOX MOST PLAYED!

Chronicles Of Riddick: Escape From Butcher Bay
Grazza managed to blag a day trip to Sweden to see Vivendi's awesome movie licence, and spent as much time gawping at the stunning birds as Riddick's finely formed FPS action. Brutal, gorgeous, gory fun.

CUBE MOST PLAYED!

Resident Evil 4
The CVG games room has been filled with the roar of a chainsaw and the sloppy splatter of metal cutting flesh for a month now. And we've been playing Resi 4, too. It's scary, it's action-packed, and it's Cube's most grown-up game.

GBA MOST PLAYED!

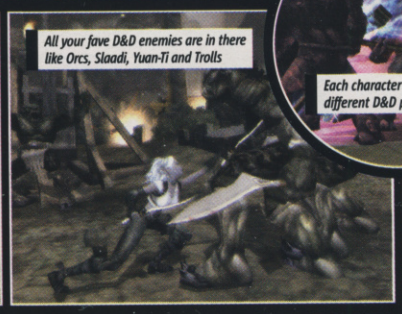


NES Classics Series
Sticking one of these little babies into your GBA is like getting sucked into a lovely videogame time machine. Won't keep you hooked for long, but, goddamit, you gotta know where games have been to know where they're going!

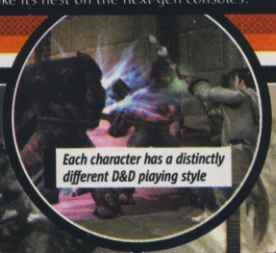
PC MOST PLAYED!

Ground Control 2
We'll tell you what's wrong with boring PC strategy games in just two words: resource gathering. That's why we love GC2. It lets you get on with blowing the crap out of everything with massed futuristic armies without having to fanny about with collecting stuff. Now that's strategy!

Stealthy, sneaky, and with seriously sexy legs, the Rogue is your acrobatic assassin



All your fave D&D enemies are in there like Orcs, Slaadi, Yuan-Ti and Trolls



Each character has a distinctly different D&D playing style

This dude's heavily armed and hard as nails. Use him to take out hordes of enemies up close

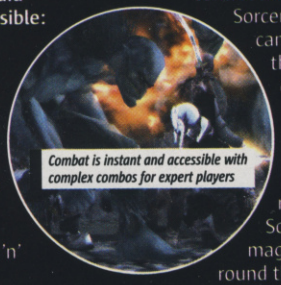
FORGOTTEN REALMS: DEMON STONE

LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS DEVELOPERS BRING DUNGEON & DRAGONS TO CONSOLE

Lord Of The Rings did something impossible: it made orcs, dwarves, and all that other fantasy gubbins cool. Even more difficult, though, is making Dungeons & Dragons cool.

But if anyone can do it it's Stormfront Studios, the guys who made LOTR: The Two Towers such a satisfying hack 'n' slash experience.

Forgotten Realms: Demon Stone is a similar type of game set in the popular but nerdy D&D universe. You'll control three warriors – a Fighter, a Sorcerer and a Rogue – and you can switch between them on the fly while the computer controls the other two.



Combat is instant and accessible with complex combos for expert players

This means you'll have to use tactics to defeat enemies and puzzles, like having your Fighter hold off rampaging orcs while the Sorcerer bombards them with magic and the sneaky Rogue nips round the back to destroy them!

The PS2 version is due out in October, with the Xbox version following soon after. We'll get hands-on real soon.

The Sorceror's staff is packed with scorching long-range electricity attacks to roast the crap out of orcs from afar

WHAT A QD!

SHOCK NEWS – NEW N-GAGE IS ACTUALLY ALRIGHT!

We got our hands on the new and improved N-Gage QD this month and to our surprise it's pretty good. Or at least, it does all the things N-Gage should have done six months ago.

N-Gage's redesign makes you look like less of a nobhead

Technically it's identical – this is not N-Gage 2, but just a redesign of the original phone to take into account the numerous criticisms Nokia received. It's smaller and lighter with raised buttons that feel more like a joypad, you don't have to take the back off to change your game, and, shockeroonie, you can actually talk on it normally.

The only bummer is that if you've already got an original N-Gage you're going to look like an even bigger fanny with it sticking from the side of your nugget.

It's encouraging to see our concerns have been addressed, and with big name games like Tiger Woods 2004, FIFA 2005, SSX and Ghost Recon set to appear, QD might save N-Gage from the handheld scrapheap.

Game cards slot into the deck easily from the bottom

You'll battle hundreds of enemies at once in full-on hack 'n' slash mash-ups!

BRAIN SCRAMBLER

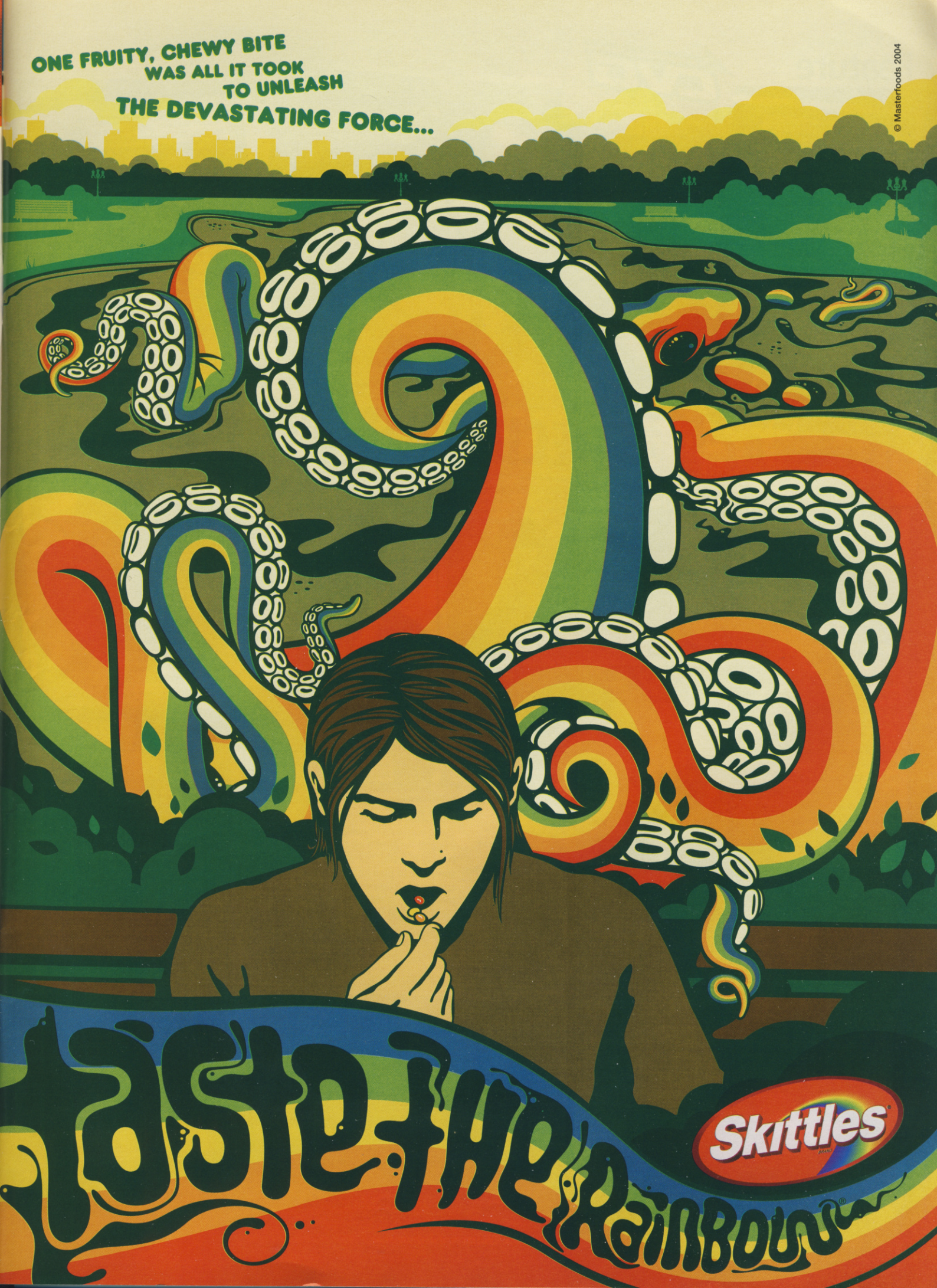
CRIMSON SEA 2

PREPARE FOR THE BIGGEST KILL COMBOS EVER!

KOEI, the guys behind the Dynasty Warriors and Kessen series, churn out some awesome hack 'n' slashers – but they're about to outdo themselves with Crimson Sea 2 on PS2. Sequel to the Xbox-exclusive Crimson Sea, the storyline's so intense we couldn't even scratch the surface, but we are busting nuts at the prospect of 1000-hit combos.

Yup, you heard us. Combining slashing, shooting, and Neo-Psionic mind attacks, you'll be able to take out hundreds of enemies at once. Multiply that by two-player co-op modes over 60 levels and we're talking, well, absolutely loads of dead enemies. It's due in September so we'll be getting our paws on this real soon.

You'll be able to take out enemies with loads of blades, guns, and mental Psionic attacks


ONE FRUITY, CHEWY BITE
WAS ALL IT TOOK
TO UNLEASH
THE DEVASTATING FORCE...
© Masterfoods 2004
taste the RAINBOW
Skittles

COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES CVG

LOCATION REPORT: TOON

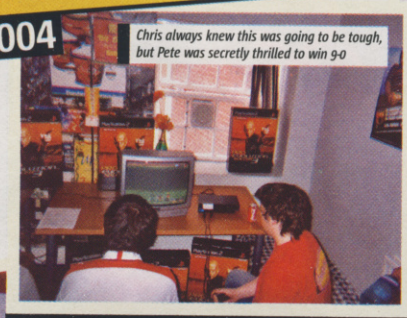
Jon Lee survives Ian Coleman's best performance of the day, beating him 4-2

Jon, Steve, and Jordan Lee: PES running in their blood, their rivals run out of town

PES LEAGUE SPECIAL REPORT

NEWCASTLE 5 JUNE 2004

Every solemn-faced Mark Raffie greeted us on what would be the Newcastle League's most important day of the year. The fight for a place in the top four was almost at an end, and it was to be dramatic. Well, perhaps not Troy dramatic, but certainly up there with the best of Corrie.



Chris always knew this was going to be tough, but Pete was secretly thrilled to win 9-0

Mark Raffie, collecting on behalf of the Bring Larsson Back to Celtic campaign

Stand well back! The refs are having a go themselves and this usually means war

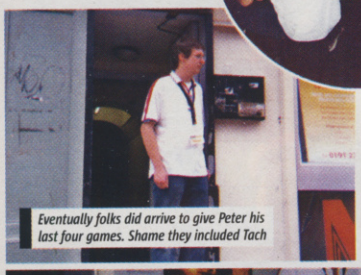
Sam from Konami gives Ian a friendly warm up. Ian forgets to use both hands

TRIALS IN TOON TOWN

It was an early start, this being the day England were to face Iceland in the last friendly before THAT France game. At 11:00 am, favourites Jon Lee, Matt Holmes, Pete Willis and Mark were already prowling the tiny darkened room on the top floor of the Cyber Games Zone.

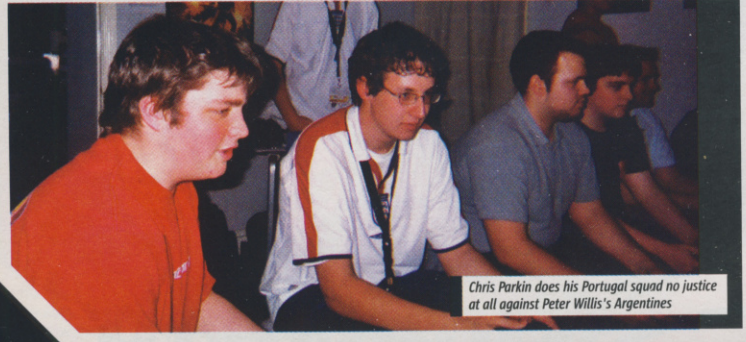
The only light was coming from the TVs, and whatever made it through the group of spectators huddled at the doorway. This included us, Jon's two brothers, and a very brave Wayne Wong, who knew he had come to watch his fourth place get knocked further down the table, eventually ending up in seventh.

This one was too important. People had to pretend they didn't know it was happening



Eventually folks did arrive to give Peter his last four games. Shame they included Tach

Before it all kicked off, the table was Tachakon Hamthanon at the top, followed by Mark, Matt, Wayne then Jon. The top three were pretty much assured – Tach, especially. The competition was all about fourth place.



Chris Parkin does his Portugal squad no justice at all against Peter Willis's Argentines

TAKE ME ON

There was a complication, however. Both Jon and Peter had all their deciding games to play in hand, but were struggling to find someone to play against. It was a very sporting Ian Coleman who agreed to help Jon's cause, a man almost determined to count himself the most unlucky in the world. Jon thanked him for his three points from a 4-2 victory. Peter was less fortunate in his choice of opponents.

RISE AND SCORE

A phone call had to be put into Andrew Shek to wake him up and get his arse down to play his last few games. He arrived looking very sleepy indeed ("They told me someone was here to see me... sniff"), but still managed to hold Peter to a 2-2 draw. This, together with a 2-1 loss against Lee Elliott meant that Peter dropped precisely the number of points required to bounce Jon Lee back up to fourth.

It was only fair in the end for the cheerful Jon, who is unanimously regarded as the best in the Newcastle league. We didn't hang around long enough to find out what Tach thinks about that, but we're sure to find out on 7 August at Stamford Bridge.✷

THE FOUR THE MERRIER

At the time of going to press Harrow was the only other league to have finalised its top four. So well done to Zesh Sadique, Femi Paul, Andy Wilson, and Tim Adegboye. By the time you read this all the leagues will have found their potential champs, so check www.pesleague.co.uk for the full list of names competing for national glory.

Femi Paul, happier to be in the finals than he looks in this photo (we hope!)

2
JULY 15
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Charts

UK TOP 20 BESTSELLERS

FIND OUT WHICH GAMES ARE FLYING OFF THE SHELVES AND WHICH ARE NOSE-DIVING INTO OBSCURITY, HOW THEY SCORED IN CVG AND WHAT WE RECKON TO THEM NOW

ChartTrack — The official UK weekly leisure software charts ©2002 ELSPA Ltd, compiled by ChartTrack, with the name ELSPA acting as a link to our website www.elspa.com

POSITION	MOVE	GAME	FORMAT/S	CVG SCORE	SUMMARY	LAST WEEK	WEEKS IN CHART
1	⇒	UEFA EURO 2004 (EA)	PS2 XB PC	79%	A downsized version of FIFA that goes big on the flashier side of footie – the focus is on swish new moves and more spectacular plays. Olé!	1	3
2	⇒	POKEMON COLOSSEUM (NINTENDO)	GC	90%	The world's most aggressive little cutie-pies clash in the coolest looking Pokémon battle royale to date. Now with added RPG elements!	2	2
3	⇒	HITMAN: CONTRACTS (EIDOS)	PS2 XB PC	78%	The chameleon killer returns, in many disguises and deadly as ever. Not nearly as polished a stealth stunner as Splinter Cell PT though.	3	4
4	↑	NORTON INTERNET SECURITY 2004 (NORTON)	PC	-	Nothing worse than having nasty worms trailing their dirty muck through your PC. Exterminate the mutha-lovin' suckas with this bad boy.	5	23
5	↓	NINJA GAIDEN (MICROSOFT)	XB	93%	Ninja Gaiden is all about flipping out and killing people. Easily the most stylish and gripping fighting adventure on any console.	4	2
6	↑	VAN HELSING (VIVENDI)	PS2 XB GBA	77%	To quote our Graeme this is "a gore-soaked, zombie-stuffed, bloodsucker-blasting blaze of an experience!" Not that he liked it or anything.	11	2
7	↑	THE SUFFERING (MIDWAY)	PS2 XB	84%	Even the sound effects are freaky and frightening enough to trigger an involuntary avalanche of vicious bum puke!	9	2
8	↓	FIGHT NIGHT 2004 (EA)	PS2 XB	89%	The super heavyweight hero that sucker-punched Rocky and stole the title of number-one boxing champ on console!	6	4
9	↑	PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3 (KONAMI)	PS2 PC	95%	We swear by it, and at each other when we're playing it. Simply the best footie game ever. And now on Platinum for £19.99!	11	5
10	↓	TRANSFORMERS (ATARI)	PS2	88%	Early on we expected a shoddy cash-in, but it turned out to be a top-drawer rampant actioner with some of the slickest graphics on PS2.	7	3
11	↓	SONIC HEROES (SEGA)	PS2 XB GC	62%	16 solid weeks in the charts, and he ain't budging. The blue bolt of lightning might've lost his spark, but he's still got star appeal.	8	16
12	NEW	SINGSTAR (SONY)	PS2	81%	Fun whether you sing like an angel or sound like a strangled cat. Worth chipping in with a few mates for a copy. More tracks would've been nice.	-	1
13	↓	THE SIMS (EA)	PS2 XB PC	85%	Playing The Sims is like squeezing bubble-wrap – utterly addictive even though there's not much to it – except without the satisfying POP!	12	47
14	NEW	RALLISPORT CHALLENGE 2 (MICROSOFT)	XB	90%	A scorching sequel that trades in all that geeky sim stuff for grit-in-your-gums thrill-packed rally action. Plus it's on Xbox Live!	-	1
15	↓	GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY (ROCKSTAR)	PS2 PC	95%	We're still playing it over and over. All the new details on San Andreas have re-kindled our burning passion for the series.	13	65
16	↑	FIFA 2004 (EA)	PS2 XB PS1 GBA	79%	We're chuffed that Pro Evo 3 has managed to stuff FIFA 2004 in this month's sales showdown... not surprising considering it's half the price.	18	31
17	↓	JAMES BOND 007: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING (EA)	PS2 XB GC GBA	83%	Spies are meant to be subtle but that's not a word in Bond's vocabulary. Screw old-skool sneaky espionage, 007 does it with a bang.	16	13
18	↓	THE SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN (VIVENDI)	PS2 XB GC PC	67%	It looks like The Simpsons and sounds like The Simpsons, but Hit & Run is about as funny as The Antique's Road Show.	17	30
19	↓	NORTON ANTIVIRUS 2004 (NORTON)	PC	-	Norton scoops the double in this month's chart, with Antivirus and Security tag-teaming their way to sales glory. Hazaar!	10	6
20	↓	TOCA RACE DRIVER 2 (CODEMASTERS)	XB PC	91%	TOCA 2 just pips Project Gotham 2 in the looks department. Gameplay-wise it's harsh as hell, however it's packed with plenty-o-rewards.	14	5

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CVG MOST WANTED

1. GTA: SAN ANDREAS (PS2)
Alex: "I nearly pissed myself when I heard that you can become a fatty by guzzling burgers and fast food. Sounds like another hilarious Rockstar touch."

2. LEGEND OF ZELDA (GC)
Paul: "Nintendo treated us to a sneak peek at an extra long new movie of it in action, and my goosebumps still haven't gone down!"

3. HALO 2 (XB)
Pete: "The multiplayer Zanzibar stuff has got me all pumped up, but I've got no doubts the one-player campaign will wow the world. Can't wait to try co-op campaign mode."

4. SPLINTER CELL 3
Mike: "The new online two-player co-op campaign is heavy. You can give each other leg-ups and dangle one another from ropes!"

5. MIDNIGHT CLUB DUB EDITION (PS2)
Graeme: "Chunky pimped-out motors with pure ghetto styling and more fast-as-fook street racing fo' yo' ass. Bring it on!"

READERS' MOST WANTED

Kieran Walters poured over our huge special E3 feature in last month's issue to hand-pick his top five future releases.

1. METROID PRIME 2: ECHOES (GC)
"Loved MP1... and 2 has multiplayer!"

2. LEGEND OF ZELDA (GC)
"I could've kissed Miyamoto on his little mushroom when I saw new Link!"

3. WARIO WARE, INC. DS (DS)
"Caught a movie of the chopping fruit mini game on a website. Looks ace!"

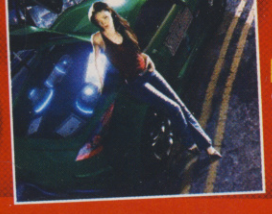
4. RESIDENT EVIL 4 (GC)
"If the new controls are as good as everyone says this'll be a classic."

5. METROID PRIME: HUNTERS (DS)
"Love how the touch-screen works – sounds a bit complicated though."

Send us a photo of yourself and a list of the five games you're most excited about with 15 words on each explaining why.
Readers' Most Wanted, CVG, Dennis Publishing Ltd, 9 Dallington Street, London EC1V 0BQ. Email: mailbag.cvg @dennis.co.uk (subject: Most Wanted)

IT'S WHAT'S OUTSIDE THAT COUNTS

US games stores are flagging up pre-orders on a special collector's edition of Halo 2 that comes in a slick metal tin! It costs $54.99 – a bit pricier than the regular version. No news on one for the UK, but seems likely.



"In Underground 2 we had a lot of dead-end streets and things you couldn't go down, but now you can actually drive down any street you want to."

Chuck Osieja
Executive Producer
Need For Speed: Underground 2

RARE CHANCE OF DS GAMES

Rumours have been flying around that Rare is currently developing games for Nintendo DS. However Microsoft recently extinguished the flames of speculation stating, "At this time, there are no plans to support the DS."

RELEASE DATES

CVG BRINGS YOU THE ULTIMATE CUT-OUT-AND-KEEP RELEASE SCHEDULE. MARK UP YOUR FAVES AND KEEP THIS LIST ON YOU AT ALL TIMES...

CUT OUT AND KEEP

JULY 2004

			I WANT IT
PS2	ATHENS 2004	02 JULY	
XB	FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR	02 JULY	
PC	GROUND CONTROL II	02 JULY	
PC	INDYCAR SERIES 2004	02 JULY	
GBA	KIRBY MAGIC MIRROR	02 JULY	
PC	FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR	02 JULY	
PS2	SHOWDOWN: LEGENDS OF WRESTLING	02 JULY	
XB	SHOWDOWN: LEGENDS OF WRESTLING	02 JULY	
PS2	SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW	02 JULY	
GC	SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW	02 JULY	
PC	WEST SOMERSET RAILWAY	02 JULY	
XB	AMERICA'S 10 MOST WANTED	09 JULY	
PC	CHAOS LEAGUE	09 JULY	
XB	HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS – XBOX CLASSICS	09 JULY	
PS2	ONIMUSHA 3	09 JULY	
PS2	RICHARD BURNS RALLY	09 JULY	
PS2	SPIDER-MAN 2	09 JULY	
XB	SPIDER-MAN 2	09 JULY	
GC	SPIDER-MAN 2	09 JULY	
PC	SPIDER-MAN 2	09 JULY	
GBA	SPIDER-MAN 2	09 JULY	
PS2	TT BIKES	09 JULY	
PC	AURA	06 JULY	
PS2	COMBAT ELITE WWII PARATROOPERS	16 JULY	
XB	TONY HAWK UNDERGROUND – XBOX CLASSICS	16 JULY	
XB	TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA – XBOX CLASSICS	16 JULY	
PS2	LEGEND OF KAY	23 JULY	
PS2	CATWOMAN	30 JULY	
PC	CATWOMAN	30 JULY	
GBA	DEFENDER OF THE CROWN	30 JULY	
PC	ULTIMATE TRAFFIC	30 JULY	
GBA	WINGS ADVANCE	30 JULY	

AUGUST 2004

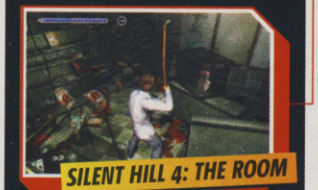
			I WANT IT
XB	CATWOMAN	06 AUGUST	
GC	CATWOMAN	06 AUGUST	
GBA	CATWOMAN	06 AUGUST	
XB	THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK	13 AUGUST	
XB	RAINBOW SIX 3: BLACK ARROW	20 AUGUST	
PC	CRUSADER KINGS	27 AUGUST	
GBA	DIGIMON BATTLE SPIRITS 2	27 AUGUST	
GBA	DRAGON BALL Z: SUPERSONIC WARRIORS	27 AUGUST	
PS2	EYETOY: CHAT	27 AUGUST	
XB	VULTURES	27 AUGUST	
PC	WORLD OF WARCRAFT	AUGUST	
PS2	HEADHUNTER: REDEMPTION	AUGUST	
XB	HEADHUNTER: REDEMPTION	AUGUST	

SEPTEMBER 2004

			I WANT IT
PS2	CONFLICT: VIETNAM	01 SEPTEMBER	
XB	CONFLICT: VIETNAM	01 SEPTEMBER	
PC	CONFLICT: VIETNAM	01 SEPTEMBER	
PS2	FLATOUT	01 SEPTEMBER	
XB	FLATOUT	01 SEPTEMBER	
PC	FLATOUT	01 SEPTEMBER	
XB	TERMINATOR 3: REDEMPTION	01 SEPTEMBER	
XB	JUICED	03 SEPTEMBER	
PS2	JUICED	03 SEPTEMBER	
PC	JUICED	03 SEPTEMBER	
GBA	MEGAMAN BATTLE NETWORK 4 BLUE MOON	03 SEPTEMBER	
GBA	MEGAMAN BATTLE NETWORK 4 RED SUN	03 SEPTEMBER	
GBA	MEGAMAN ZERO 3	03 SEPTEMBER	
PC	THE ROOTS	03 SEPTEMBER	
PC	MYST 4: REVELATION	10 SEPTEMBER	

ATHENS 2004

"Worth an hour or so from time to time, but only if you can rope in enough mates. Feels more like an experiment."



SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM

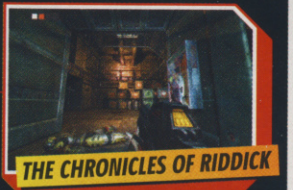
"It's brave of Konami to mess around with a successful formula, but the extra action content keeps you on edge."

HOT PICKS

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THESE SIZZLING NEWCOMERS IN YOUR LOCAL GAMES SHACK

RICHARD BURNS RALLY

"Impressively adept simulation with hardcore credentials, but not accessible or instantly rewarding enough."



THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK

"Shaping up to be one of Xbox's best shooters to date. We just hope the movie is half-way decent too."

PIKMIN 2

"Everything is bigger. The environments are even more beautiful and imaginative and puzzles more intriguing."

			I WANT IT
PC	CREATURE CLAN	17 SEPTEMBER	
GBA	MARIO GOLF: ADVANCE TOUR	17 SEPTEMBER	
XB	PSI-OPS	17 SEPTEMBER	
PC	THE SIMS 2	17 SEPTEMBER	
PC	CODENAME PANZERS	24 SEPTEMBER	
GC	NEIGHBOURS FROM HELL	24 SEPTEMBER	
XB	NEIGHBOURS FROM HELL	24 SEPTEMBER	
PS2	RESIDENT EVIL OUTBREAK	24 SEPTEMBER	
PC	MEDAL OF HONOR: PACIFIC ASSAULT	24 SEPTEMBER	
XB	PILOT DOWN	24 SEPTEMBER	
PC	SILENT HUNTER 3	24 SEPTEMBER	
PC	SPECNAZ	24 SEPTEMBER	
PS2	SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM	SEPTEMBER	
XB	SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM	SEPTEMBER	
GC	SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM	SEPTEMBER	
PC	ROME: TOTAL WAR	SEPTEMBER	
GBA	BOKTAI 2	SEPTEMBER	
PS2	CRISIS ZONE	SEPTEMBER	
PS2	DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NEW YORK	SEPTEMBER	
XB	DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NEW YORK	SEPTEMBER	
GC	DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NEW YORK	SEPTEMBER	
PC	S.T.A.L.K.E.R	SEPTEMBER	
GC	WWE DAY OF RECKONING	SEPTEMBER	
GBA	FINDING NEMO: THE CONTINUING ADVENTURES	SEPTEMBER	

OCTOBER 2004

			I WANT IT
PC	FORD RACING 3	01 OCTOBER	
PS2	STARSKY & HUTCH 2	01 OCTOBER	
PC	STARSKY & HUTCH 2	01 OCTOBER	
PS2	KNIGHT RIDER	01 OCTOBER	
PS2	MIAMI VICE	01 OCTOBER	
GBA	POKEMON FIRE RED	01 OCTOBER	
GBA	POKEMON LEAF GREEN	01 OCTOBER	
PC	SHADE: WRATH OF ANGELS	01 OCTOBER	
PS2	AQUANOX	08 OCTOBER	
XB	AQUANOX	08 OCTOBER	
GC	PIKMIN 2	09 OCTOBER	
GC	DONKEY KONGA	15 OCTOBER	
PS2	GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS	22 OCTOBER	
PC	COSSACKS 2	29 OCTOBER	
PS2	100 BULLETS	OCTOBER	
XB	100 BULLETS	OCTOBER	
PS2	BURNOUT 3	OCTOBER	
XB	BURNOUT 3	OCTOBER	
PS2	PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4	OCTOBER	
PC	PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4	OCTOBER	
PS2	FIFA 2005	OCTOBER	
XB	FIFA 2005	OCTOBER	
GC	FIFA 2005	OCTOBER	
PC	FIFA 2005	OCTOBER	
PS	FIFA 2005	OCTOBER	
GBA	FIFA 2005	OCTOBER	
GBA	BANJO PILOT	OCTOBER	
GBA	LEGO KNIGHTS' KINGDOM	OCTOBER	

NOVEMBER 2004

			I WANT IT
PC	SNIPER ELITE	05 NOVEMBER	
PS2	TONY HAWK UNDERGROUND 2	05 NOVEMBER	
XB	TONY HAWK UNDERGROUND 2	05 NOVEMBER	
GC	TONY HAWK UNDERGROUND 2	05 NOVEMBER	
PC	TONY HAWK UNDERGROUND 2	05 NOVEMBER	
XB	HALO 2	09 NOVEMBER	
XB	STILL LIFE	26 NOVEMBER	
PS2	THE INCREDIBLES	NOVEMBER	
GC	THE INCREDIBLES	NOVEMBER	
XB	THE INCREDIBLES	NOVEMBER	
GBA	THE INCREDIBLES	NOVEMBER	
PC	THE INCREDIBLES	NOVEMBER	
PS2	HOT WHEELS: STUNT TRACK CHALLENGE	NOVEMBER	
XB	HOT WHEELS: STUNT TRACK CHALLENGE	NOVEMBER	
GBA	HOT WHEELS: STUNT TRACK CHALLENGE	NOVEMBER	
PC	HOT WHEELS: STUNT TRACK CHALLENGE	NOVEMBER	
PS2	THE POLAR EXPRESS	NOVEMBER	
GC	THE POLAR EXPRESS	NOVEMBER	
GBA	THE POLAR EXPRESS	NOVEMBER	
PC	THE POLAR EXPRESS	NOVEMBER	

RELEASE DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

SPIDER-MAN 2™
THE GAME

NOWHERE YOU CAN'T GO.
NOTHING YOU CAN'T DO.

Preview the game trailer on the *Spider-Man Deluxe Edition* DVD.

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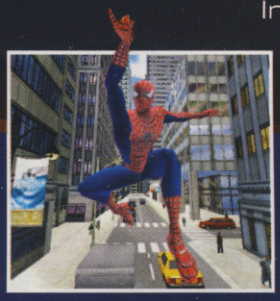
Pick your own path: battle Doc Ock, bust street crimes or clash with classic villains.



Swing through a living, highly detailed Manhattan.

Web swing for the first time from street to rooftop across the entire city.

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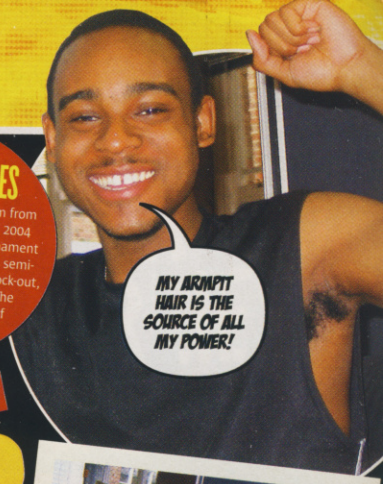
WE TICKLED OUR GOAL SACKS WITH EA'S UEFA EURO 2004. GOAL PIE!

CHALLENGE CVG

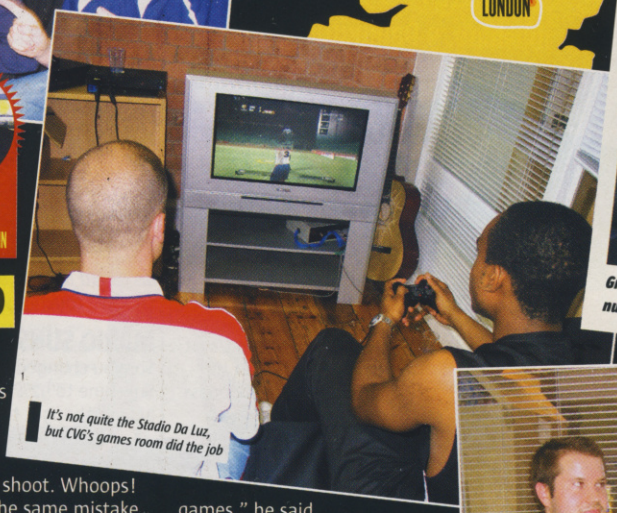
CVG takes on the cream of European football with UEFA Euro 2004!

CHALLENGE RULES

Each player chooses a team from England's first round Euro 2004 group at random. The tournament then moves straight to two semi-finals and a final, instant knock-out, or settled by penalties. The winner feels the pride of European glory!



Grazza wins 2-0, but Oz won 3-0 at Pro Evo, so it's actually 3-2 to Oz on aggregate


It's not quite the Stadio Da Luz, but CVG's games room did the job

Grazza can't believe he's missed after nutmegging Marvin's defence. Olé!

TEAM CVG VERSUS ILFORD ILL SQUAD

You've heard of Spot the Ball, right? This is a new game we've invented called 'Count the Chins'

If you've been flicking through this issue of CVG and came across some blank pages, don't blame us. In an act of extreme selfishness UEFA organised a football tournament and had the audacity to put some games on WHILE WE SHOULD HAVE BEEN WORKING!

Still, we did manage to fit in time to invite our pals Oz and Marvin round the office for a quick tourney on UEFA Euro 2004. Oz won last month's Pro Evo Derby Day and Marvin's his training partner, so these guys know their footie games like footballers know roasting.

Picking their teams randomly from England's first round group, Oz drew Croatia, Marvin scooped Switzerland, Paul snatched England, and Graeme 'luckily' chose France. "It's a fix!' said Oz as the big kick-off loomed...

SEMI-FINAL 1: OZ VS GRAZZA

Forget France versus England at the Stadio Da Luz. The real European grudge match took place in CVG's sweltering games room between arch rivals Grazza and Oz.

The animosity started when Oz won a tenner off our Scotch lad at the Pro Evo Derby Day with a smokin' 3-0 win. "I still haven't spent it," he bragged, "I don't splash cash I didn't work for."

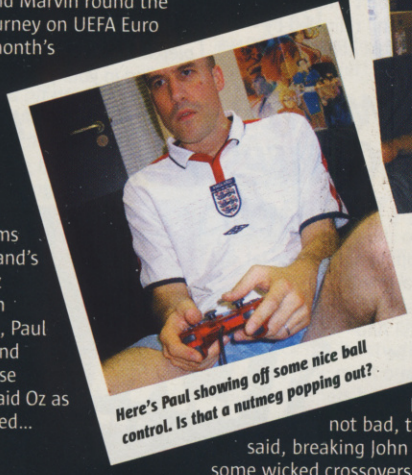
Luckily, Oz isn't so familiar with Euro 2004's FIFA controls. Clean through on goal he committed the cardinal sin – pressing Square to shoot. Whoops!

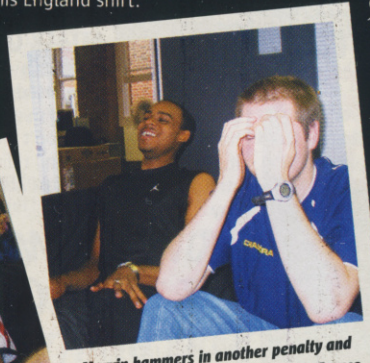
Grazza didn't make the same mistake, and slotted one away. The result was put beyond doubt when Grazza scored a cheeky rebound off the keeper – it's known as a 'Newson' at CVG in honour of designer Mike's bargain basement goals.

SEMI-FINAL 2: MARVIN VS PAUL

For Paul, football's not a matter of life and death – it's much more important than that. You could literally smell the pride as he pulled on his England shirt.

Marvin was the outsider in the group with Switzerland, but still caused Paul's defence all kinds of problems. "They're not bad, these guys," he said, breaking John Terry's ankles with some wicked crossovers. But no goals, so the game went to penalties. It stayed all square until Paul blasted his third over the bar. Sensing the win, Marvin slotted home his next pen into the bottom corner, then pulled off a wonder save to win the game!


Here's Paul showing off some nice ball control. Is that a nutmeg popping out?


Marvin hammers in another penalty and it's all gone to merde for Grazza's France

FINAL: MARVIN VS GRAZZA!

Having gone months without a Challenge victory, Grazza fancied his chances. "This is it – I'm going to prove I'm the king of games," he said, nutmegging one of Marvin's defenders then sending the shot fizzing past the post. D'oh!

Piling on the pressure, Grazza went close with a header and another scorching shot from Henry. It was becoming clear that Marvin fancied his chances in the shoot-out, and started wasting time. "The mark of a real champion is the ability to go the distance," he said. "You big cheat," replied Grazza.

Thing is, Grazza sucks at penalties. He's rubbish. He's got less chance of scoring than Bernard Manning at a feminist's convention. And right enough, he blasted his first two penalties straight into the arms of Marvin's keeper. "He's reading my mind!" he cried as another pen got turned round the post and his championship dreams melted away. ✷

Puffed out with Swiss pride, Marvin shakes Grazza's sweaty loser hand

RESULT MARVIN IS DA MAN!

Grazza had everything in his favour – the best team in the game against the weakest team in the group – and he still managed to choke. Marvin, however, used his superior FIFA skills to drag the performance of a lifetime out of his silky Swiss ball-strokers.

To be fair though, it's unsurprising. Look at the evidence: when has anyone ever won anything wearing a Scotland football shirt?

So what does this mean for the real European Championship? Will England get stuffed in the first round? Will hot favourites France cruise to the final and get thumped by a team with less skill but more heart? Or will a bunch of European minnows like Marvin's Switzerland grab the trophy? We're not sure, but we're off down the pub to find out...

BRING IT ON...

REMEMBER YOU'VE GOT TO BE IN IT TO WIN IT!

Last month we told you about our brand new, hi-tech training facility

Seen Rocky 4? It's like Ivan Drago's Soviet training camp, but it smells like bacon crisps and there's more joypads. Well, we're almost ready to unveil our new gaming machine. He's like a robot, a crazy games-playing robot with button-bashing fingers of steel. His codename is ED-209, and HE WILL OWN YOU!

★ HELLO, MY NAME IS: ..... [nickname] [age]

★ BUT YOU MUST CALL ME ..... ★ AND I'M ..... [game name]

★ I AM THE BEST AT: .....

★ MY ADDRESS IS: .....

★ DAYTIME TELEPHONE NO: ..... ★ EVENING TELEPHONE NO: .....

★ EMAIL: .....

Send to: CVG Reader Challenge, CVG magazine, Dennis Publishing, 9 Dallington Street, London, EC1V 0BQ

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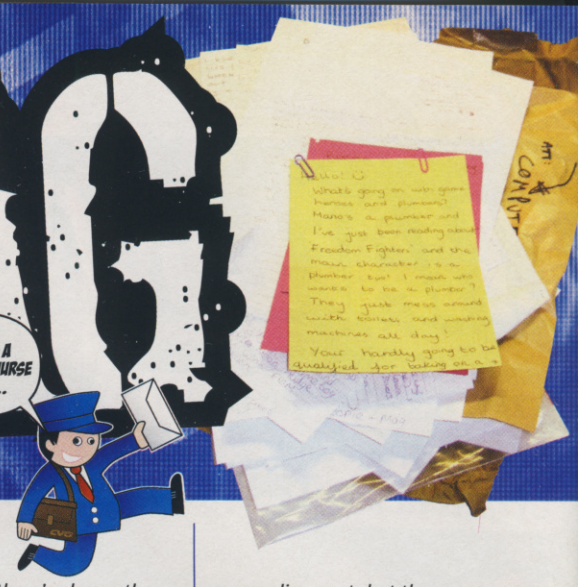


You could win £150 for speaking your mind! Send your thoughts to: Mailbag, CVG, Dennis Publishing, 9 Dallington Street, London, EC1V 9BQ

LEE HAS LEFT THE BUILDING

I was indulging myself in the wonderful world of videogames CVG-style when the words 'Lee is leaving' popped up like the lid of a Pringles can. I almost choked on my rich tea biscuit and my pants were suddenly in need of a wash to get rid of two brown stains – one was coffee, the other was, well, you can guess. Why is this? And while I'm on the subject, where is Johnny 'Stinkley' Minkley? He and Skitters could have ruled the world!

Jeffrey, Ireland

CVG Mate, you've opened up the wound that is Lee's departure on CVG. There's pus everywhere. Our fave reviews editor jumped ship for a fancypants job in games PR. Rumours of Satan turning up at his house with an offer on his soul are unconfirmed. We miss ya Skitters, come and see us, and bring your new company credit card. And Minkley? He's upstairs, sniffing for news nuggets and tugging the bits of string that make CVG.com work.

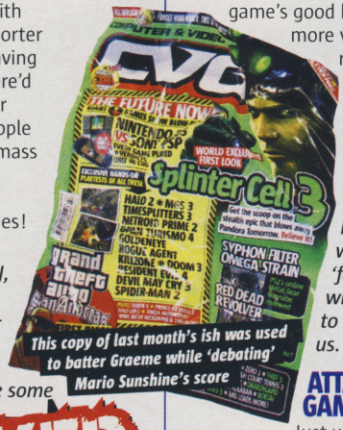
Life isn't the same without him – no more stains on the bog seat or Country 'n' Western choons

DEVELOPMENT DREAM TEAM

We've all thought about Microsoft, Sony and Nintendo combining powers to make a kick-ass console called, um, Microsontendo. But what if the top game developers did this? Let's say Bungie, Valve and Id brought their best attributes together to make a truly whoopass first-person shooter. With XNA's tools offering shorter developing times and having three or more teams there'd be loads of extra time for creativity and polish. People would buy the game in mass numbers, as it would be the product of all these developer's finest qualities!

LJ, Ireland

CVG It's a slick idea LJ, but so is world peace. Although a Real Madrid-style collection of dev-team Galacticos could produce some truly amazing stuff, there's always the problem of too many cooks and we bet there are about 46,427 boring business reasons why it wouldn't make sense. Anyway, games developers shouldn't need to share skills, they should be aiming to perfect every aspect of their own titles. Hopefully tools like XNA will help them do it and leave loads of time for the creative touches we love.



This copy of last month's ish was used to batter Graeme while 'debating' Mario Sunshine's score

MARIO SUNSET

So, you changed the score of Mario Sunshine to 92% instead of 10/10. I always thought that was too high. The game's good but Mario 64 had far more variety and replayability.

Hosea, email

CVG That's the wonderful thing about the Big 50 – it lets us update scores to reflect what's happened since, or when Nintendo 'forget' to hook us up with that 18-30 holiday to Faliraki they promised us. Just kidding.

ATTACK OF THE GAY GAMERS

Just wanted to say: screw girl gamers. I won't – I'm gay! If they get a hard time then they don't know the half of it. It's bad enough being ridiculed by straight guys when I talk about games but gay guys don't even want to know.

"JUST WANTED TO SAY: SCREW GIRL GAMERS. I WON'T – I'M GAY!"

We are a rare species, like girl gamers, and although we do share the same enjoyment of whupping a guy's ass (at videogames), we have to put up with queens and their bitchy remarks! And although they may be crap at least you get games made for girls!

James, email

CVG First girl gamers, now gay gamers – CVG truly is a cosmopolitan, metro-sexual games mag! It's awesome to see so many different types of game fan having their say here, even if James beat us to the punch with the joke we were going to make (whupping a guy's ass... bah!). We sympathise with your predicament, but there are gay games out there or at least with gay stars: Shenmue prances to mind, or El Burro in GTA 1, or maybe those sapphic honies off Fear Effect and what about, um, Space Channel 5? Whatever, keep playing anyway!

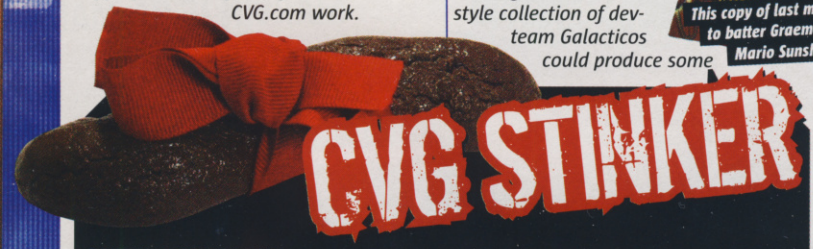
Real girl gamers like to stroke Tommy's leg with their fingers. Apparently

THE REAL GIRL GAMER

To my suprise I opened my latest Issue of CVG and saw a girl "trying" to claim she's a gamer. And when I saw her pic I was outraged! This is not what a real gamer looks like! Look at my pics and see for yourself! That's a REAL girl gamer! Not all girl gamers are some bloke's boyfriend. People will never see the true talents of female gamers this way!

Jacinta, email

CVG Is Jacinta the real girl gamer and all you other girl gamers are just imitators? Won't the real gamer lady please stand up, please stand up? Keep sending in your photos!



CVG STINKER

LETTERS FROM THE OLD FOLK'S HOME

Slow down! There is loads of talk about the next generation consoles but is it really necessary? I own an Xbox so this is probably a biased opinion but a lot more can still be squeezed out of Microsoft's monster. The truth is that PlayStation is the leading console so if they decide to do something then all the others must follow or be left behind. But I reckon Microsoft should wait until the Xbox has been used to its full capacity before they bring out Xbox 2, so if you're reading this Bill, WAIT!

Nathan, email

I think that in this world of fast-moving technology we've forgotten the pure fun of video games and got hung up on the rivalry between console-makers and owners. There should be only two types of console, handheld and home systems, and all these innovations Nintendo and Sony have come up with will just cost a fortune. Eventually no one will be able to afford the best of the best.

Alasdair, email

CVG CVG's first ever Double Stinker goes to Nathan and Alasdair, two lovely old fellas who spend their days gently pissing themselves as they reminisce. 'Slow down'? 'Cost a fortune'? Sod off! Progress is a good thing! It means faster, better, more beautiful games! Mind you, we got along okay without those new-fangled automobiles. Bread was fine before they started slicing it. And electricity? Overrated...

TEXT 2 B HEARD

TEXT YOUR MAIL TO: 83125

How to enter: first type 'CVG MAIL' and then enter your message. Keep it short, keep it sweet, and make your point real quick!

TEXTS COST 50P PLUS STANDARD OPERATING CHARGE

CVG STAR LETTER

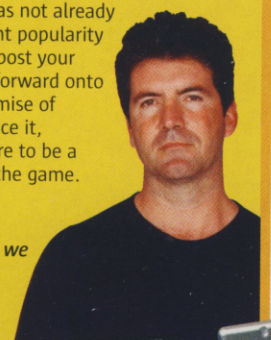
I WANNA BE A SINGSTAR IDOL

WIN £150!

Had a thought for a new game/TV show opportunity that I'm surprised Simon Cowell has not already come up with. With the recent popularity of singing games, why not develop a game that will post your score online? The top 100 or so could then be taken forward onto a TV show to find the eventual winner! With the promise of stardom the game is sure to sell in its droves. Let's face it, everyone thinks they can sing, and the TV show is sure to be a success because of the popularity of the format and the game.

Mark, email

Wicked idea – only problem is that we'd lose all the talentless mentalists straight away, and that's what we watch Pop Idol for, isn't it? It's certainly not for fat Scottish munters. We reckon there's real potential for this, but don't tell Cowell – he's loaded already.



Sure, he might look like a tool but he could buy your ass right now

WINNER

cex

■ Star Letter-writers win £150 to spend at CeX. CeX is the place to trade in your old games, DVDs and consoles for new ones, or sell them for unbeatable cash pay-outs. With games starting from £3, the winner could get 50 games! Check out www.cex.co.uk for more info.

WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR?

"Cheers, grandad. Cheers for risking your life for our country so that we can play games like Finest Hour." Where was the Editor when he should've been removing bollocks like that? There's no conceivable way that anybody could possibly use a videogame as compensation for the biggest atrocity the world has seen. What about the 50 million people who died so we could be here, let alone play videogames? This subject shouldn't be taken in such a light manner. War shouldn't be treated like a game.

Daniel, email

***CVG** Are you pissed off at us or at people who make games about war? Look, war sucks, but games have the potential to portray the horrors of conflict in a far more tangible and harrowing way than history lessons or films. The fact we live in a society where we're free to play these games is thanks to the millions of soldiers who fought in WW2. So, once again, cheers grandad.*

NINTEN-DO NOT RESUSCITATE

I think the N5 will be the last of Nintendo. They'll just make games instead of consoles like Sega. PS3 will be awesome as you will be able to download games off the internet. They could improve this if you could buy virtual reality goggles to feel like you're in the game.

Virtual Boy: it really felt like you were in the game – until you blew chunks everywhere

Paul, email

***CVG** PS3's online technology is getting us hot, especially after talk of Matrix-style entertainment networks. But virtual reality? It was a nice idea, um, 15 YEARS AGO, but we'd rather do without the migraines and nausea, ta. Mixed views on Nintendo's future again this month...*

DS ROCKS!

The DS is Nintendo's saviour. It's the coolest thing ever! Trust Nintendo to come up with the most innovative console ever. The stylus may not sound like it'd change the playing experience but it actually makes the games the most original ever. So many developers have pledged to develop for it already. With top class games like Mario and Metroid already being shown, there is no danger of a lack of brilliant games. I just hope people will support the DS for its originality and all the quality gaming experiences the Big N has given us throughout the years.

"THE DS IS NINTENDO'S SAVIOUR. IT'S THE COOLEST THING EVER!"

Dermot

***CVG** You're right: DS couldn't have come from anyone except Ninty. Having been hands-on with the wee monkey we were delighted with the touch screen and the innovative game concepts, but remember it takes more than funky ideas and happy memories to sell a console.*

NINTENDO COPIES CVG

Just about choked on my cornflakes when I saw the similarity between Nintendo's early version of the DS and your artist's impression from CVG 271. So are you lot on the design team or what?

We reckon you're either gonna love it or hate it – tell us what you think of DS!

Baz, email

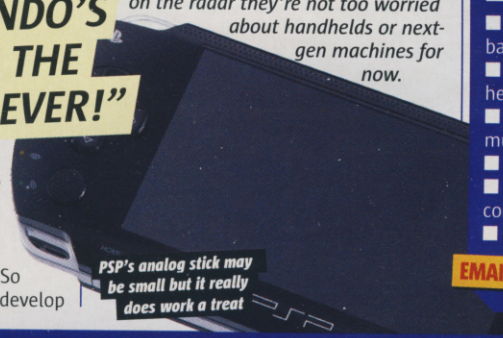
***CVG** It's uncanny, eh? In fact, we reckon Jaime's cracking impression of the DS actually looks BETTER than the official version. Further proof that CVG gets it right every time. Well, nearly.*

MICROSOFT'S NO-SHOW

Microsoft revealed surprisingly little at E3. Most of the stuff they showed wasn't anything new. Unlike Nintendo with the first mock-up (hopefully) of the DS, and Sony with the new-look PSP. Speaking of, why is the PSP's analog stick so tiny, and why bother with such a massive D-pad?

Matt, email

***CVG** True, while Ninty and Sony flashed their new-tech knickers about, Microsoft stayed buttoned up. But with Halo 2 on the radar they're not too worried about handhelds or next-gen machines for now.*



PSP's analog stick may be small but it really does work a treat

SHORT & CURLIES

CHOPPED UP, SHIPPED OUT

■ Is Graeme putting on weight? Maybe he should spend some time with Nurse CVG!
Or maybe less time with the pork pies?

■ Do you remember the PD game "Deluxe Galaga" on the Amiga? That was great. I'd love to see it remade on the GBA.
Might as well, the GBA never gets any really original games...

■ Why do games like PGR2 and Ghost Recon focus more on online features when most gamers like me can never afford it? Hope Halo 2 doesn't!
You can't even play Halo 2 unless you've got broadband. Only joking.

■ Are we ever going to get an original Zelda game on the GBA?
Er, yeah. Minish Cap yo.

■ The new Zelda looks frikkin' amazing! I still think they should make another cel-shaded game though.
If you half close your eyes it looks cel-shaded.

■ I'm a girl, and I much prefer Halo to crap like Puyo Pop.
Is that maybe because Halo's a better game?

■ Finished reading the mag, now I'm bored... still bored. Even more bored. Even more bored than before. Extremely bored. Bored stupid. Bored to death. Dead.
We beat you to it.

■ How on EARTH have you not mentioned The Sims 2!? I DEMAND there is AT LEAST a double page report on it! How can you not be excited about it!
Okay, okay, just calm down... NEXT MONTH WAAAAAH!

MAILBOMBS!

Gently stroking our topicality glands with a firm but gentle touch:

■ PSP vs DS (again!): Who're you backing in the handheld wars?
■ E3 Hangovers: What's making your head throb?
■ Car customisation in games: Too much or not enough?
■ Next-gen: Too much too soon?
■ Hot girl gamers: Keep the proof coming!
■ Monkeys: They're ace, aren't they?

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PS2 XBOX

RELEASE DATE
CHRISTMAS

GAME INFO
COST: TBC
PLAYERS: 1-8

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: ROCKSTAR
- DEV: ROCKSTAR SAN DIEGO
- WWW.ROCKSTARGAMES.COM
- ONLINE: YES

Rockstar's ghetto superstar has evolved. Welcome to the DUB revolution!

湾岸 MIDNIGHT CLUB 3™ DUB® edition

Cruising around Tesco car-park in a souped-up lime-green Nova with a spoiler the size of a surfboard is about as stylish as popping a cocktail umbrella into a can of Fosters.

There's no disguising the truth. You can't polish a turd no matter how much Halford's wax you rub onto it. Even the higher-class motors on the UK's car-modding scene don't cut it in the global style stakes. We're talking hook-ups here.

The moment you spray a Skyline bright Peckham pink, fit a satellite-sized exhaust pipe and splatter it with decals you're entering a land of tack and tastelessness.

But a massive new custom car scene, heralded the DUB revolution, has swept America and is now blazing cross-continent on a road trip that's set to take the UK by storm. And Midnight Club 3's leading the charge. Screw Golf GTI's and naff Escorts. MC3: DUB Edition's all about setting your sights sky-high and customizing the freshest high-rollin' rides out there with the finest expensive show-off modifications, from gold trims to ten grand rims.

CVG EXCLUSIVE * CVG EXCLUSIVE * CVG EXCLUSIVE * CVG EXCLUSIVE * CVG EXCLUSIVE * CVG EXCLUSIVE *
WORLD'S FIRST LOOK

So what's the deal with DUB? It's West Coast street speak for the number 20 and is now the term used for rims measuring 20-inches or more! There's even a US mag called DUB that covers the scene and features superstars that drive these sorts of pimped out mega motors, ranging from hip-hop heavy-weights like Ludacris to sports stars such as b-baller Shaquille O'Neil and even our very own bad boy David Beckham!

Trust Rockstar to be on top of this scene from the start. So much so, that it's joined forces with DUB mag to bring you the world's first free-roaming street racer soaked in this exclusive killer scene!

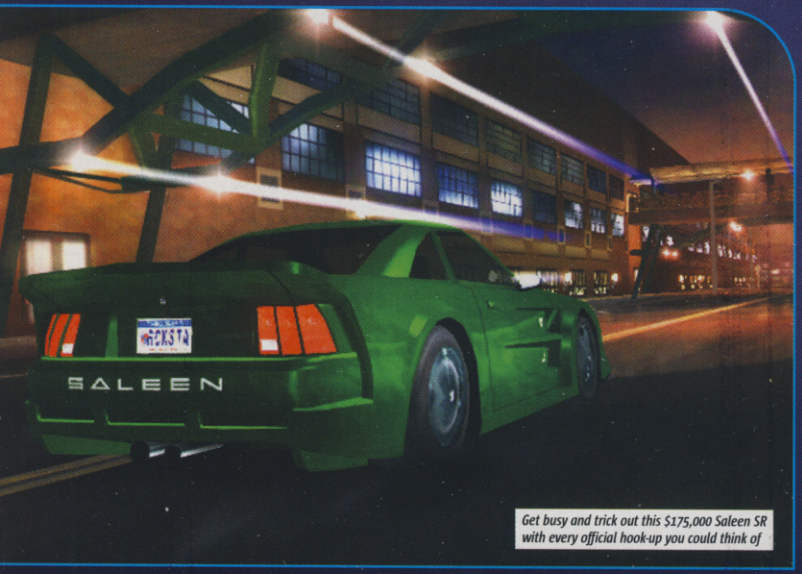
This month CVG flew out to Rockstar's New York headquarters in a chrome-rimmed Jumbo 747 to get the world's first exclusive in-depth look at the slickest street racer cruisin' the 'hood.

RIDING IN THE LAP OF LUXURY

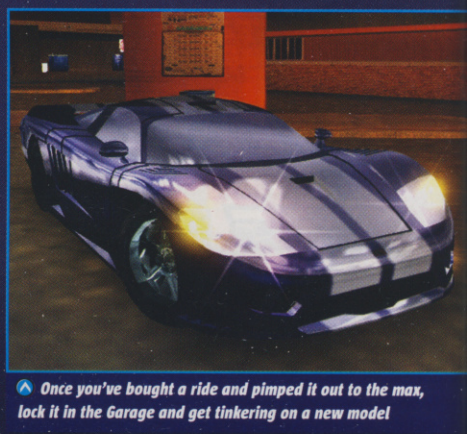
The character-led vibe of Midnight Club 2 has been scrapped because, in the world of DUB, the car's the star.

This time all the rides are fully licensed, with over 50 official vehicles lighting up the streets in the finished game. But these ain't the sorts of motors you immediately associate with hardcore street racing.

Sure there'll be custom high-end Japanese imports, but MC3: DUB Edition serves up a whole range top class vehicles, including classic American hotrod muscle cars and luxury Sports Utility Vehicles (SUVs). But the DUB lifestyle extends

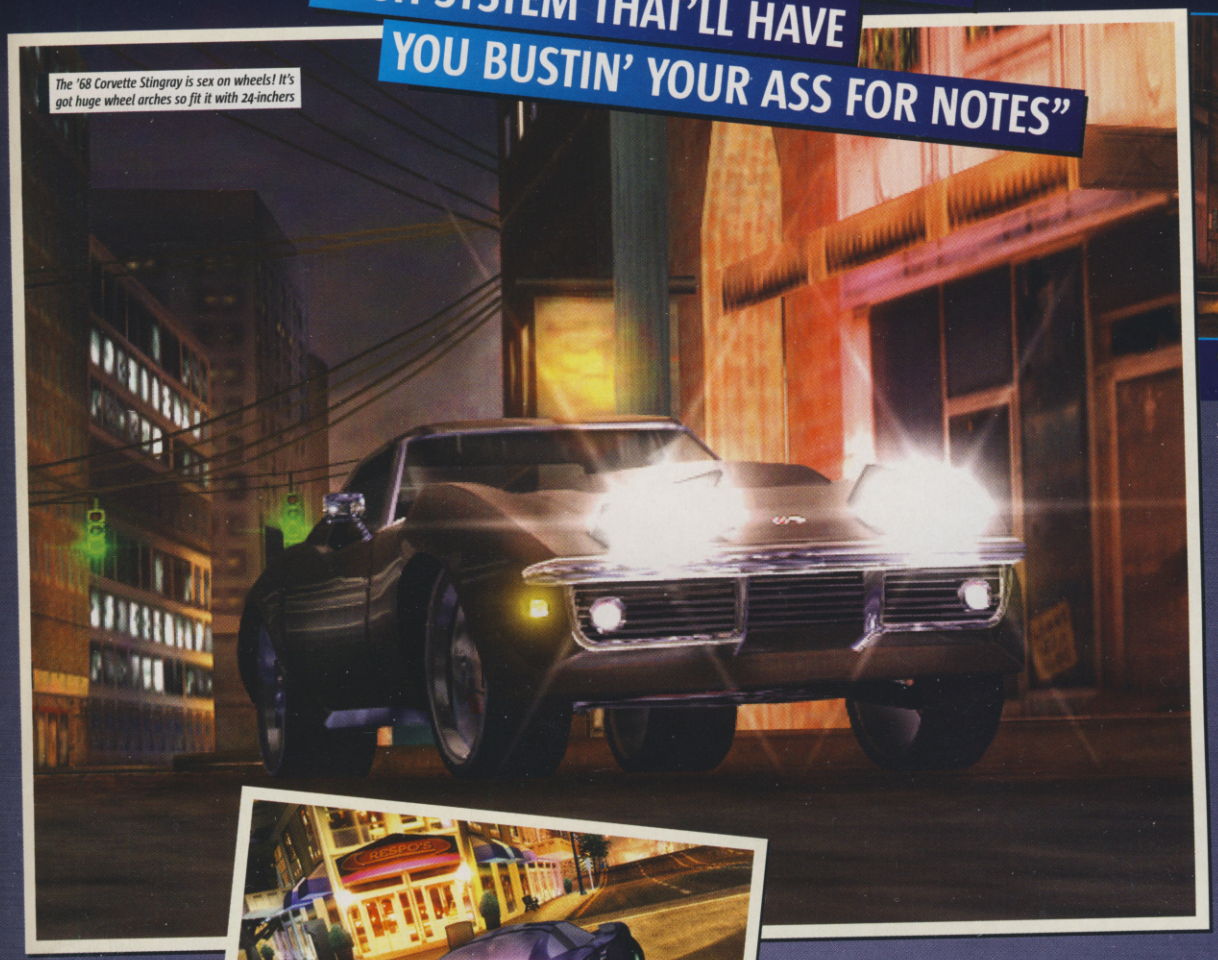


Get busy and trick out this $175,000 Saleen SR with every official hook-up you could think of



Once you've bought a ride and pimped it out to the max, lock it in the Garage and get tinkering on a new model

"DUB EDITION INTRODUCES A NEW CASH SYSTEM THAT'LL HAVE YOU BUSTIN' YOUR ASS FOR NOTES"



The '68 Corvette Stingray is sex on wheels! It's got huge wheel arches so fit it with 24-inchers

Check out the gold-plated exhaust pipes on this racing Saleen S7. What a wicked touch!

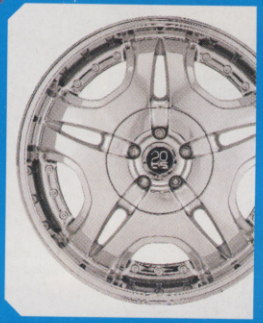
beyond four-wheelers – you'll also get to customize and rip up the streets in real-life custom choppers and speed bikes. We took a tour around MC3: DUB Edition's slamming new Garage set-up and it promises to be the sweetest custom mode on the circuit.

It's stacked with masses of the most blingin' official hook-ups that enable you to proudly tweak your ride out to pimped perfection. Plus you can inject so much of your own personality and attitude into each ice cool creation.

You can just keep fiddling with every aspect of your vehicle's appearance until you're totally convinced it's utterly unique and got that celeb-status feel. You'll even be able to apply five different highlight colours to your ride with the new Colour Shift option, which gives you infinite paint job possibilities. Want a white Hummer with pink, purple, green, yellow and blue highlights that show up in different lighting? No problem, it's yours!

As for the rims, each model – from Davin Spinners (which rotate even when you're stopped) to TIS chrome hook-ups – are all fully 3D modelled to make your ride look even more spectacular. There are masses to pick from and you can also alter the size, slamming out your ride with up to 26-inch monster rims... that's if it's got massive enough wheel arches to hold the muthas.

Both the Custom Choppers and Speed Bikes are now fitted with killer nitros



■ **DUB mag launched way back in 2000 when the scene was still bubbling underground.**

Over the years it's been celebrating all the latest stacked out rides, coolest hook-ups and superstar car collections, giving DUB mag the most respected voice on the scene. Now the DUB lifestyle's huge, with sales of custom rims exceeding $3.1 billion in 2003. DUB Mag even sells it's own range of ultra desirable chrome rims called TIS (Twenty Inches Strong). American car manufacturers are even using DUB's expertise to give them advice on how to make their cars have that pimped-out feel. Now Rockstar's hooked up with them to make MC3: DUB Edition the most authentic DUB-style racer imaginable.

THE DUB CONNECTION

So many detailled working parts have been crammed onto the exteriors of all the rides. Every inch of this Hummer is spot on

This concept Cadillac Cien isn't even on sale yet, but you'll get to slam one around in MC3

CITY SLICKER

Life on the streets in MC3: DUB Edition isn't always lived at breakneck pace.

Roll around 'hoods off and online just flashing your thing in the Cruise mode. Soak it up!

UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

It's got a totally new graphics engine and the results are phenomenal. The lighting, reflections, polish and pizzazz are all outstanding, adding that extra bling factor.

DANGER POINTS

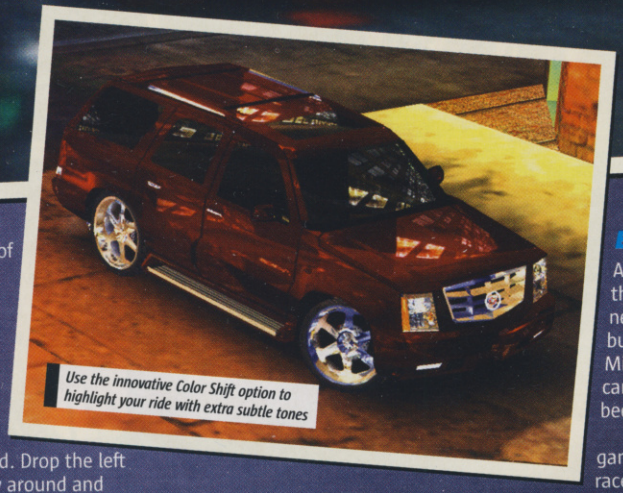
These are living breathing cities. So crashes occur, ambulances are called out, trains snake all over town and everywhere accidents are waiting to happen.

WHATEVER THE WEATHER

We quizzed Rockstar on whether there'll be weather effects in the finished game. At this early stage it's still being considered but hasn't been confirmed. We'll keep you posted.

Each city is peppered with places to nail the nutty stunts that can shoot you into the lead

HOT SHOT



Use the innovative Color Shift option to highlight your ride with extra subtle tones

No two vehicles ever need be the same in MC3: DUB Edition, so your identity both online and offline will always feel utterly unique and mint fresh.

LOOKING ICE, RIDING HIGH

Rockstar exclusively gave us the drop on one of the coolest ways to make your ride stand out on the street: Air Ride Suspension! We watched a top spec Cadillac Escalade low-ride in the Garage – identical to the big ballin' one on our cover – then suddenly the front of the lavish SUV lurches up like a bucking rhinoceros.

It's heavy. Air bags are fitted all around the underside of the car that kinda work like hydraulics. This upgrade lets you totally mess with how your motor sits on the road. Drop the left side and lift the right, play around and come up with any kicking combination.

All the districts in each of the three cities have their own unmistakable vibe

Owning ARS makes you feel like a serious high-class player. Especially when you shift online, because how you floss your ride represents your personality. Sit at a set of lights with your 'Slade resting one inch off the tarmac and wait for someone in a smaller ride to pull up. When they roll up, trigger the ARS to rear your chassis a couple of feet off the tarmac and intimidate the arse of 'em! This is the sort of show-off stuff that DUB Edition encourages you to do.

But it's not just all cosmetic. Many of the slickest style modifications like Air Ride Suspension aren't just for show – they actually affect the way your beloved beast handles too. If you jack your motor up too high it might roll over on sharp turns as you try to snap away from the pack. Then, if you lower the front and raise the back, you'll be more aerodynamic like an urban dragster. And, of course, you can tinker with the performance of your ride and alter what's under the hood as well as the razor-sharp exteriors. It's tuned-up, tricked-out, customisation heaven.

EARN IT TO BURN IT

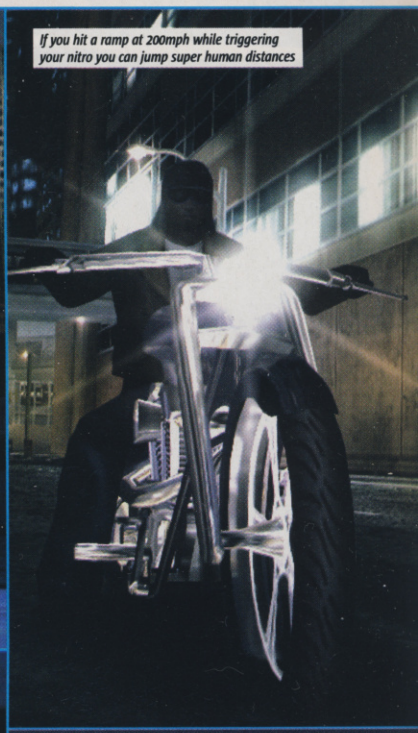
All this luxury shit ain't free though. DUB Edition introduces a new cash system that'll have you bustin' your ass for notes. In Midnight Club 2 you unlocked the cars you beat, but that set-up's been kicked to the gutter.

We asked if you'd be able to gamble your cash against other racers in the single player and online, but were met with silence and coy grins. Nonetheless, CVG reckons it would be ace if you could stump up a fat wedge and risking it on a single showdown. Rockstar wouldn't spill its guts just yet on how the money system works in the revamped Career mode, but we do know that you'll pump every penny you earn

DUB magazine even features in the game on giant billboards and chrome badges on certain rides

"YOU COULD FRY AN EGG ON THE BONNET, IT'S FRICKIN' SIZZLING"

After serious fender-benders, sections of the road are blocked off with cones



If you hit a ramp at 200mph while triggering your nitro you can jump super human distances

The environments are almost as much the stars as the cars. You can smash up almost anything!

FIZZING IT UP DOWNTOWN

We rode shotgun as Rockstar blistered through Detroit in a turbo-charged race at the wheel of a bullish '69 Dodge Charger. As we slam up the gears and start roaring towards top speed it feels like you're being fired out of a rocket-launcher, it's that fast. Stacks quicker than Need For Speed.

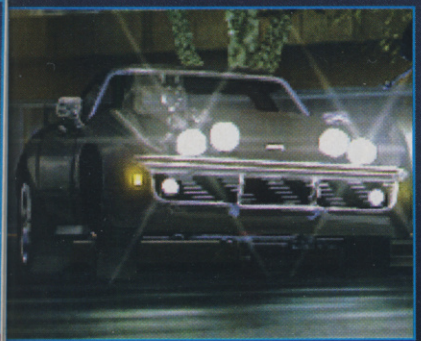
Then a blinding speed haze effect streaks handsomely from the centre of the screen when the nitros are fired, threatening to rip our eyebrows clean off and suck your eyeballs out. It's all a world apart from Midnight Club 2 in the pace department, but we've only scratched the surface.

Chassis rubs on chassis as we tough it out with a pack of aggressive opponents, into buying new rides, pimping them out, and collecting a Cribs-style garage-full of head-turning vehicles. So now you get to cherry pick a ride for all occasions.

Once you've washed the grease off your ice-encrusted paws it's time step out of the Garage and hit the streets. MC3: DUB Edition expands on its roots as the original arcade free-roaming city racer, with the action sprawling across Detroit, Atlanta and San Diego. But it remains a dusk-till-dawn racer, so don't go expecting any jolly midday cruises. The clue's in the title – MIDNIGHT Club.

The Career's no longer a straight linear affair like in MC2, where you had to plug through one city to unlock the next. Now you scoot between all three gargantuan street racing hotspots with a more freestyle open set of challenges, enabling you to pick which races you want to enter.

You'll have already sussed from our super crisp pics that MC3: DUB Edition looks outrageously fresh and polished, but what you can't guess is how buzzing the cities have become. Every 'hood boasts unique stand-out styling and is rammed with unpredictable traffic, pesky jay-walking pedestrians, masses of cool destructible scenery, a fat load more kick-ass shortcut routes and stunt opportunities. No race ever goes by without some sucka racking up a huge re-spray bill. Ker-ching!

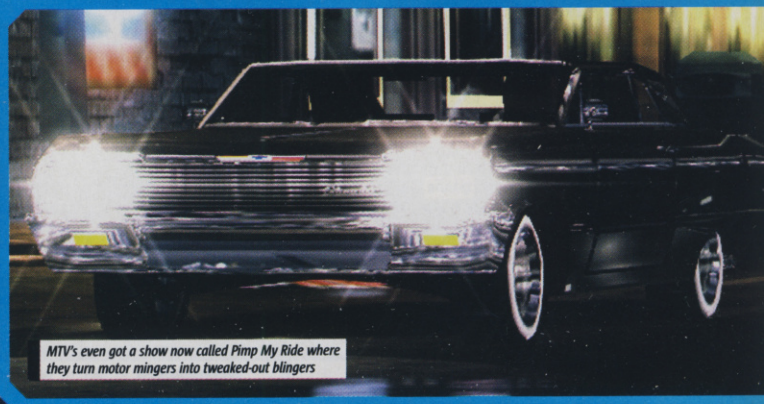


Rockstar promises that there'll be plenty of surprises growling under Midnight Club 3's hood

DUB attitude isn't all about the newest cars. It don't care for that. Anyone with a love for DUB styling is only interested in what looks slick, rich, exclusive and original.

That's why MC3: DUB Edition features classics from the '60s and '70s as well as all the latest rides like the knife-edge-styled Cadillac Cien. You'll be able to pimp-out this boat-sized Chevy Impala and loads of other old-skool rides with the newest hook-ups. When you see this bitch hop up high off the road and sparkle down the street you feel like a total hustler.

PIMP MY RIDE



MTV's even got a show now called Pimp My Ride where they turn motor mingers into tweaked-out blingers

"THE FRONT END OF THE LAVISH SUV LURCHES UP LIKE A BUCKING RHINOCEROS"

PIMP MY RIDE

It's crazy what some celebs get done to their rides. It's all about personality and ownership. Take Lakers goliath Shaquille O'Neal.

He's had his famous Superman logo embroidered into every leather seat in his entire car collection, including his stretched Lamborghini Diablo. He even had the grill on his blood red Escalade modified to incorporate the Superman badge.

Rockstar hasn't yet revealed whether you'll be able to tweak out your interiors or modify your ride to this extent, but we're rubbing our lucky rabbit foot and kissing our four-leaf clover repeatedly in the hope that we get jackpot lucky.

searching for that perfect opportunity to break free, all the while weaving insanely through traffic, busting through piles of boxes, crumpling up fences and screeching through pedestrian-packed walkways. Out of the blue, BLAM! A totally unscripted mad pile-up occurs in the distance. Time to swing out onto another road and look for a shortcut, all the time keeping one eye on the map and tabs where you're headed.

This is where things get even tastier. Now there are heaps more chances to bust away from the safe route and explore cities at top speed. We crash through the lobby of an apartment block and pick up a couple of seconds. Then we swing through a fully operating car factory, before skilfully slipping down a back alley and hitting a wicked jump that shoots us over a building and plants us beautifully into the number one slot – like a super swish muthaf@*er. You could fry an egg on the bonnet, it's frickin' sizzling.

DO THE KNOWLEDGE!

It's gonna pay big time to cruise the cities and learn their layouts as well as you know your own hometown. Otherwise you'll never hunt out the masses of secret shortcuts that lurk within each bustling

You'll even get to trick out your Custom Choppers with a fat load of offical afterparts

DUB BE GOOD TO ME

■ **You get treated like a superstar in MC3: DUB Edition. It's not a case of busting your nuts for crappy rewards and rubbish rides.**

All the wedge you earn from racing chumps in Detroit, Atlanta and San Diego is gonna buy you into the DUB lifestyle. Every ride is jaw-droppingly expensive and exclusive. So, with over 50 rides to unlock and masses of accessories, you're going to have to earn like crazy and keep mercilessly tearing up the streets. Plus these are mostly American motors, so they're super-sized heavyweight rides that make the cars we get over here look about as sturdy as flimsy-assed prams. CVG wouldn't mind having this harem of heavy rides parked outside our crib...

HUMMER – $63,000

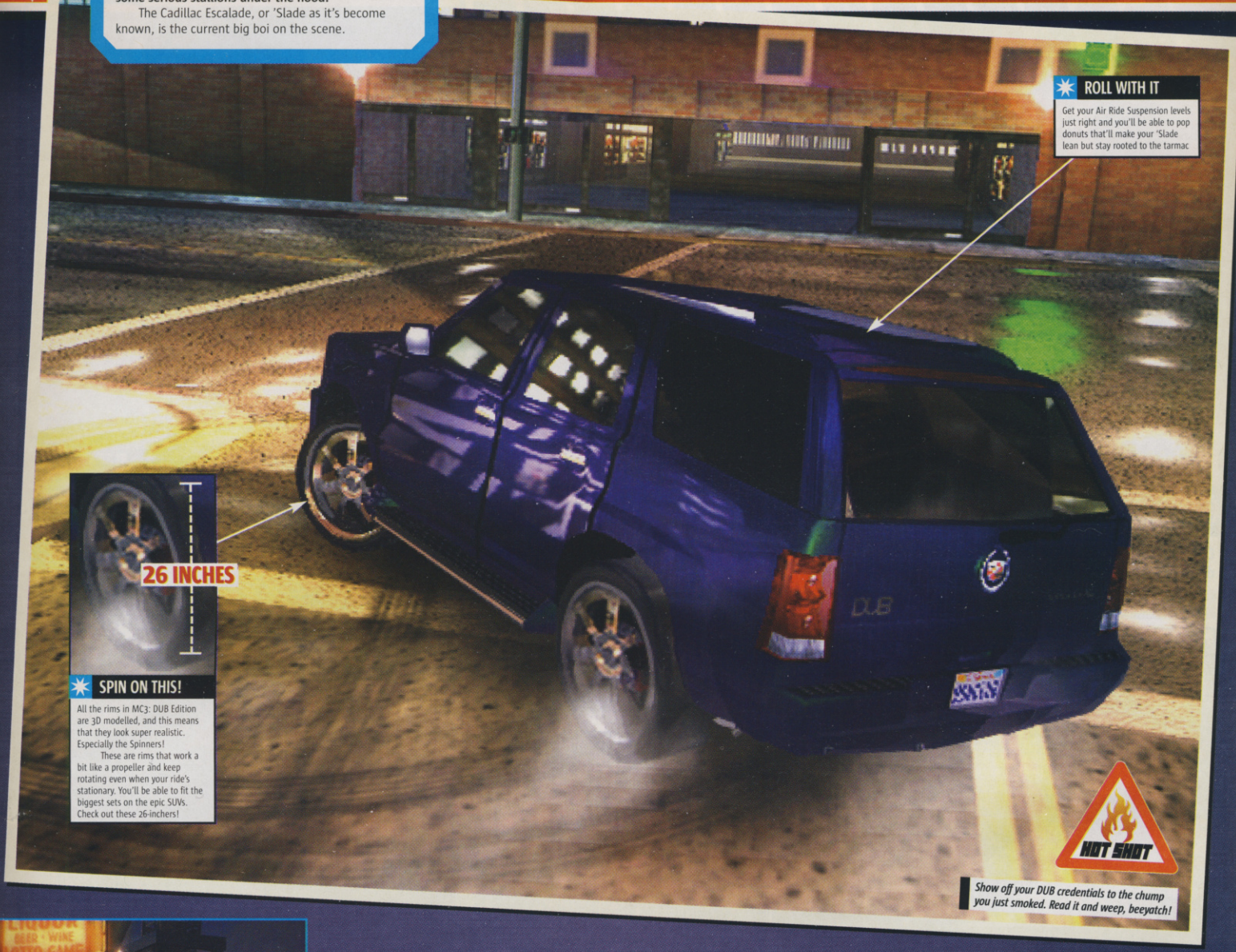
CADILLAC ESCALADE – $75,000

SALEEN S7 –

BIG, BAD AND BEAUTIFUL

The luxury SUVs in MC3: DUB Edition are packing some serious stallions under the hood.

The Cadillac Escalade, or 'Slade as it's become known, is the current big boi on the scene.



ROLL WITH IT

Get your Air Ride Suspension levels just right and you'll be able to pop donuts that'll make your 'Slade lean but stay rooted to the tarmac

26 INCHES

SPIN ON THIS!

All the rims in MC3: DUB Edition are 3D modelled, and this means that they look super realistic. Especially the Spinners!

These are rims that work a bit like a propeller and keep rotating even when your ride's stationary. You'll be able to fit the biggest sets on the epic SUVs. Check out these 26-inchers!

Show off your DUB credentials to the chump you just smoked. Read it and weep, beeyatch!

MC3: DUB Edition is the first city racer to capture the true gritty nature of ghetto street life

location. And knowing how to attack a shortcut is just as important as finding one, because when you pounce online every cat will be clued in on the quickest routes. But, if you've planned ways to slip in there first or slam enemies so they miss a shortcut and kiss the concrete, you'll fast gain a hot rep within the online scene.

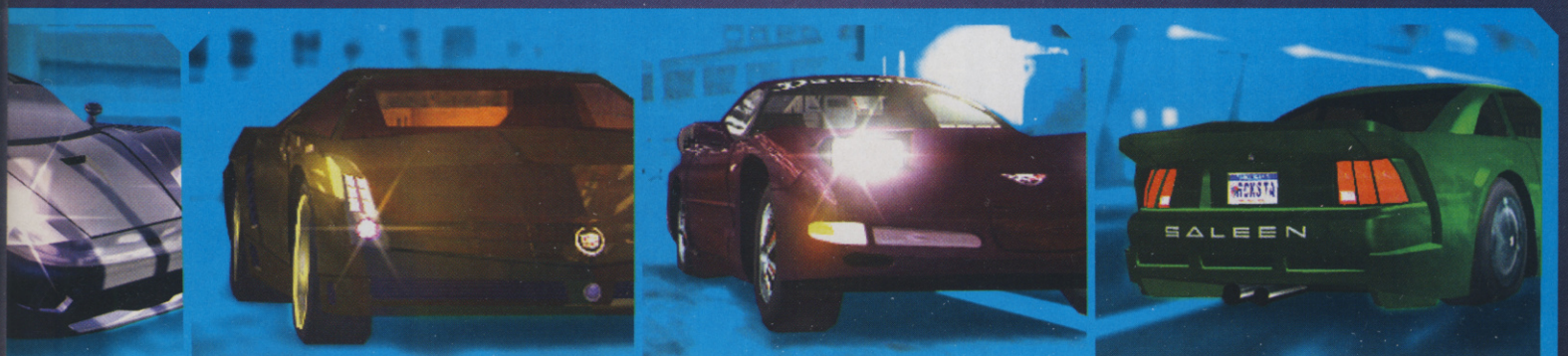
Don't get too precious about your beloved tricked-out automobiles though, because you'll need to play rough, let the sparks fly and smash up your ride if you're going to become a major player. Even though all the motors are officially licensed, Rockstar has got the go-ahead to smash the shit out of each and every one of them. The damage looks spectacular, but remember MC3: DUB Edition is still an all-out arcade thriller, so none of this chassis crumpling behaviour will affect the speed or handling or your ride. It's been chucked in to make the races feel savagely explosive and edgy.

RACE EDITOR REVAMP

We prodded and poked Rockstar for more info on what to expect from the rest of MC3: DUB Edition, and managed to find out that the Race Editor is back in. It's going to be seriously revamped for both on and offline play, with Rockstar suggesting that loads of exciting new twists are on the cards.

As for the soundtrack and in-car entertainment, Rockstar isn't just going for a pure hip-hop tune list. In keeping with it's against-the-grain attitude, there'll be stacks of other DUB-style licks booming from the fat stacks in your trunk.

We've tasted what this dope new scene has to offer and there's no going back. You can stuff your maxed-out Micra up your poop-chute. It's all high-rollin' from here on in, and we ain't gonna be satisfied unless we're rollin' on DUBs.



460,000 | CADILLAC CIEN – $TBC [FAT CASH FOR SURE] | CORVETTE – $60,000 | SALEEN SR – $175,000

INCOMING

ACCESS ALL AREAS TO THE FATTEST FORTHCOMING GAMES!

FEEL THE BURN WITH CVG'S SUMMER PREVIEW SPECIAL!

Summer rules, eh? Sun in the sky, football on the telly, burgers on the barbeque, and long, sweaty nights playing videogames.

But the best thing about summer is checking out all the hot games you'll be playing in a few months, like Snowblind's intelligent FPS blasting, Burnout 3 and Outrun 2's red hot racing, Resi 4 and Silent Hill 4's scary shocks, and Second Sight and Psi Ops' mind-bending action! Sit back, soak up the rays, and get frazzled by our blazin' summer round-up!

Graeme Boyd

Graeme Boyd *Team CVG*

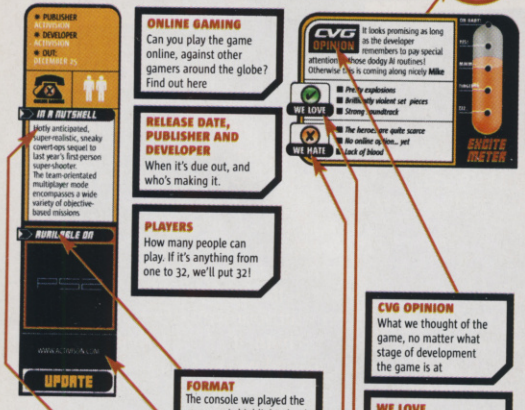
HOW CVG'S PREVIEWS WORK

CVG's reviews are the most accurate, informative and downright honest you'll ever read. Here's why...

CVG VERDICT BOX

THE BEST PICS
See just how good (or bad!) the game looks with CVG's sweet-as Kylie's bum screenshots. Woo-ee!

INFO OVERLOAD
What it's like to play, how it compares to other games and whether it's any good



WHAT THE EXCITE METER™ MEANS

You can tell how excited CVG's experts are about the game being previewed simply by looking at the Excite Meter! Easy, huh?

The game chucks in all manner of intense action set pieces to keep you on your toes

- PUBLISHER EIDOS
- DEVELOPER CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
- OUT: AUTUMN 2004

ONLINE GAMING x16

IN A NUTSHELL

A slick mix of Deus Ex's body-mod mechanics and relentless, shell-spraying action tense enough to take on the current crop of FPS kings. Weapons are awesome, AI is wicked – the future of the shooter just got even brighter.

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

ALSO ON

XBOX, PC

www.eidosinteractive.co.uk

SNOWBLIND

We're itching for all this biotechnology to arrive so we can get our claws on some body-modifying nano-augmentations to inject into our eyeballs.

Most CVG boys fancied some handy extra right-foot force to rip up the net during footie – but our Grazza's yearning for industrial strength guff power so he can tunefully fart along to all that scary Euro-pop he likes. Be thankful he's got nowt to do with this latest sci-fi first-person blaster.

UNDERDOG EAT DOG

With Halo and Half-Life 2 busy readying to do battle in the ring for the FPS crown, the team at Crystal Dynamics has been quietly pouring their talents into Snowblind – and we're already dribbling over the neat new twists crammed into the game so far.

Slapped straight into the turmoil of a near-future Indo-Asian war ground, you're the bio-enhanced leader of a crack team of commandos. While you won't control your comrades directly, they're smart enough to look after themselves and even help you out in sticky situations. You'd better take care of your men though – lose one of your ten-strong team and that's that, they ain't coming back. With a finite amount of back-up, you'll find later levels rock hard if you've been careless with your squad early on, encouraging you to keep the blighters alive for as long as you can.

BIO LOGICAL

The science fiction setting piles all kinds of possibilities into the action – on top of health, you'll have to stock up on bio-energy to keep your wealth of collectible body-mods in working order. The stuff you can jack into

MEET THE NEIGHBOURS

You'll come across some truly formidable foes in your violent voyage across the war-torn country. Even when they look a bit weedy like the foot soldiers, their AI is vicious.

Alongside some insanely crafty human combatants, we've seen military robots that pack more punch then Tyson's right hook and some staggeringly brutal armoured vehicles.

Foot soldiers might not look all that – but they're no pushover

Bloody tanks – you'll need some major firepower to take 'em out

Keep your eyes on the skies too – ammo-laden choppers are never too far away

"THE STUFF YOU CAN JACK INTO YOUR SYSTEM ADDS AN EXTRA FAT LAYER OF GAMEPLAY"

Your electrical field bio-mod can feck up all manner of enemy equipment – tzzzzzt!

BLINDED BY GENIUS

We're amazed at the amount of cool stuff Crystal Dynamic's managed to pack into Snowblind, even at this early stage.

We're told that they've still got a ton of neat tricks up their sleeves, which we'll see over the next couple of months. Here's a round-up of some of our favourite features that we've seen so far.

The weapons handling is gratifyingly meaty making wanton destruction an absolute blast

If too many team-mates start curling up their toes, you'll be in the shit later

ON THE RADAR

As well as housing a handy radar, this little baby also keeps track of your health and, more excitingly, your bio energy levels. You'll need plenty of it to keep your body-modifications working at full throttle, so keep watch for extra energy canisters if you don't want to be stuck with gun power alone

GUN TURRET

Levels are liberally sprinkled with static weaponry for some serious destructible force. Watch it though – if enemies spot that they're closer to a turret than you are, they'll make a grab for it. You don't want to be on the wrong end of that

SCI-FI HIGH FIVE

The Indo-Asian setting all looks very Blade Runner-esque, making for some moody, atmospheric locations to stage the relentless action. Best of all, there's an incredible amount of destructible scenery to exercise that ammo on

CARMAGEDDON

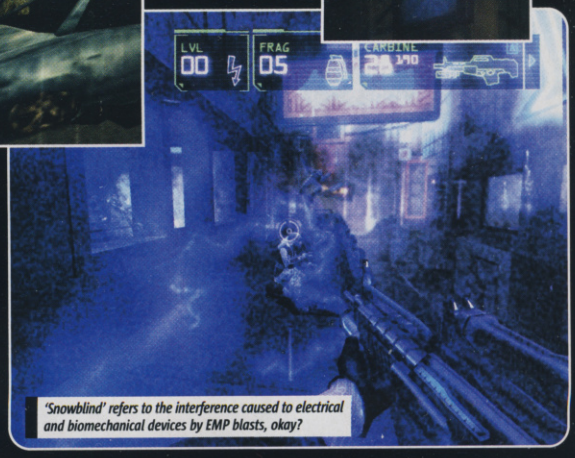
If you get sick of all that footwork, you can leap into any of the vehicles littering the landscape and take to the road for some raging racing thrills. Crystal Dynamic's even promising car-mounted artillery for some extra mayhem

your system adds an extra fat layer of gameplay to the proceedings – so far we've seen invisibility, speed and slow-motion modifications. There's even one that lets you take over enemy bots and send them out to do your dirty work. Best of all, you can mix them together for some wicked tricks like slowing down the action and boosting your speed so you can grab grenades from the air and chuck them back in their owners' faces. Nice one!

ALIEN ARTILLERY

The insane arsenal of standard and futuristic weapons, like the Flechette that unleashes a swarm of fearsome nano-bots to eat into enemy flesh, can be upgraded too. Whack augmentations onto rocket-launchers, sniper rifles, machine-guns and grenades to max them up and unleash their Ultimate Firing modes. Beef up your grenade-launcher, for instance, and you can toss Sticky Grenades into the throng – glue one onto an enemy's back and cackle as they run screaming back to camp and blow up their team-mates. What's coolest is the way all this augmentation happens on the fly, making sure the pulse-pounding pace doesn't let up for a minute.

There's simply so much awesome stuff in Snowblind, like the drivable vehicles, insanely devious AI, jaw-dropping action set pieces and multiplayer mayhem, that there's just not enough room to cover it all here. Check back soon for the latest low-down on this stunning-looking rampage of carnage and destruction. ✷



'Snowblind' refers to the interference caused to electrical and biomechanical devices by EMP blasts, okay?

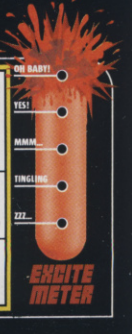
We dig the fact that some weapons are so freakin' huge they take up half the screen!

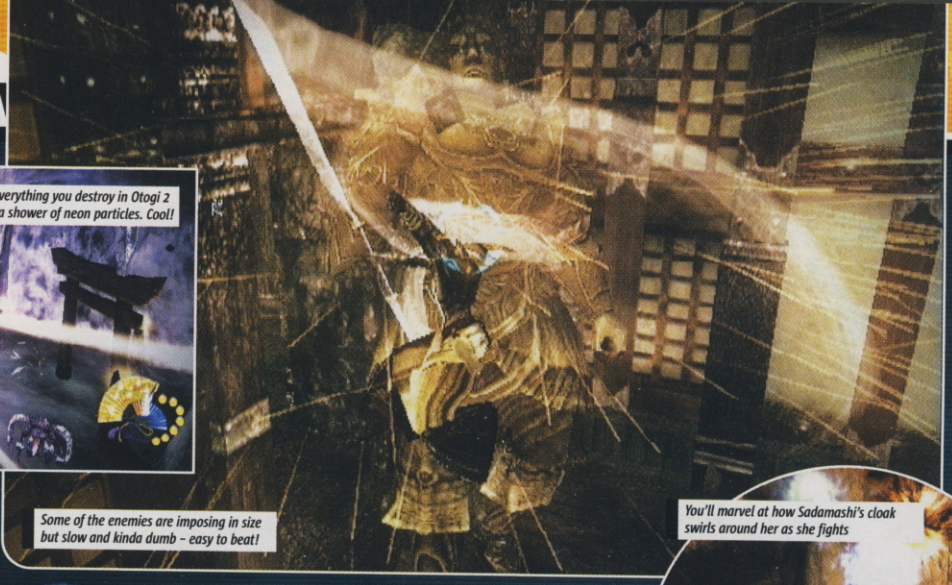
Stick a grenade up a guy's arse and the impressive physics will bring a tear to your eye

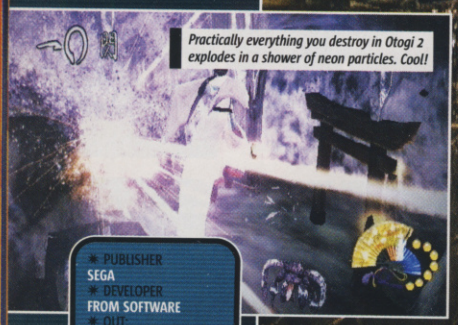
CVG OPINION Our pants are already moist over the big FPS sequels due later this year, but Snowblind's promising a lot of extra depth and some amazing gameplay twists. **Matt**

WE LOVE
- *Fast, frantic, blazing balls-out action*
- *Bio-mods do some well cool stuff*
- *Smart, beefy weapons pack a punch*

WE HATE
- *Switching between weapons is laborious right now*
- *The action is a bit too linear*







Practically everything you destroy in Otogi 2 explodes in a shower of neon particles. Cool!

Some of the enemies are imposing in size but slow and kinda dumb – easy to beat!

You'll marvel at how Sadamashi's cloak swirls around her as she fights

Otogi 2

- PUBLISHER: SEGA
- DEVELOPER: FROM SOFTWARE
- OUT: EARLY 2005

IN A NUTSHELL

Second in the series priding itself on the most beautiful graphics around, inviting you to smash them all to oblivion. An undead hero named Raikoh has the starring role, and is joined by five fantastical new characters.

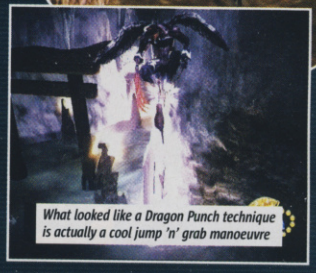
AVAILABLE ON

XBOX

WWW.FROMSOFTWARE.CO.JP

Woe betide anything that stands in the way of Kintoki's mighty axe. Bish! Bash! Bosh!

This lovely watercolour map highlights the intensely Japanese style of presentation

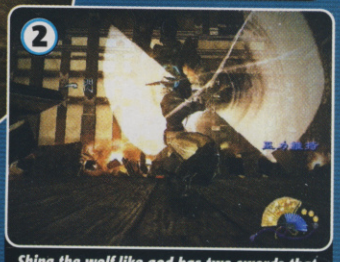

What looked like a Dragon Punch technique is actually a cool jump 'n' grab manoeuvre

NEW WRECKING CREW

After supposedly vanquishing all demons in the first Otogi, undead warrior Raikoh is finally allowed to rest.

Yet evil has clawed its way back into the world, and so a priestess named Seimei instructs four heroes to give their lives in order that Raikoh may return. The quartet is also reborn to help Raikoh banish those demons to hell!

Raikoh looks resplendent in his shiny new armour, and now battles with godly power

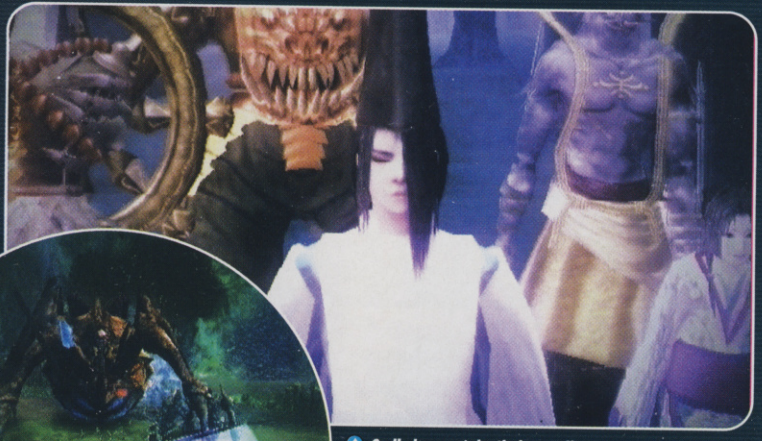


Shina the wolf-like god has two swords that he whirls to create the biggest combos

Suetaki the tree spirit looks weird, but its multi-targeting attacks deal big damage

Sadamashi makes sushi of her enemy with a scythe. She's kinda weak though

The first Otogi released last year was a visual spectacle beyond anything else on Xbox. Its sequel gushes graphical exuberance like water from a busted New York fire hydrant – get too close and you'll be soaked in splendour!


Godly heroes take their own lives to resurrect Raikoh

FAMED FOR BEING FABULOUS

Within Xbox circles, From Software's Otogi is almost as legendary as the ancient Japanese characters it portrays. It is renowned for pushing Xbox to the limits of graphical performance, with its glorious rendition of heroes and beasts battling so hard they destroy everything around them in showers of sparks and debris.

It came close to deserving a space in any collection, but in the end was treated with caution because of its simplistic (yet fun) gameplay. You might have seen or even played it, but you probably couldn't find a reason to own it.

The best way to defeat the spiders is to hurl their babies at them – they explode on impact!

With the sequel, From Software has expanded Otogi's horizons in every respect. Instead of one character to choose from, you eventually have six. Each one can be nurtured to develop increasingly more spectacular abilities through experience in battle. Furthermore, instead of just one path through the game there are several. The final blessing is a Havoc mode, unlocked after the completion of a stage, which invites you to go back and cause as much noisy destruction as possible within a time limit – see if you really can't burst your Xbox open at the seams under the strain of such a demanding technical performance!

Seimei uses magic to break obstacles over a wide range

EVEN IMMORTALS HAVE LIMITS

We're glad Otogi wasn't abandoned after the original's luke-warm reception. Its appeal is hypnotic, with its methodical destruction of scenes – many of them so wondrous it almost feels criminal.

The sequel's gameplay remains focused on melee attacks and magic to orchestrate something resembling a fire outbreak in a munitions factory. But your efforts must now be more tactical, because each character is different. Likewise, enemies are more inventive in their attacks and require guile to defeat. If you want to see the best each legendary hero has to offer – and you know it's gonna be worth it – you must push them to the best of their ability to eradicate all demons, and uncover every secret locked away in the environments.

CVG OPINION

More than just special effects and gorgeous graphics. We're into games that let you boost up characters – and this pulls you in and keeps you hooked. **Paul**

WE LOVE
- Bringing it all tumbling down
- Maxing the power of these gods
- Finding the best use for characters

WE HATE
- Occasional clumsy camera angles
- The harsh time limits can be a bit unforgiving

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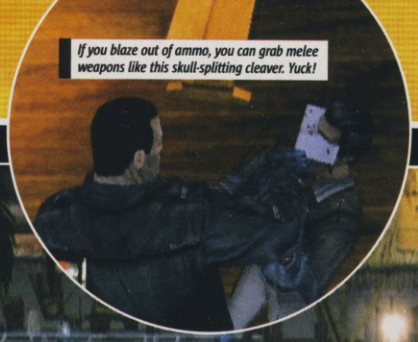
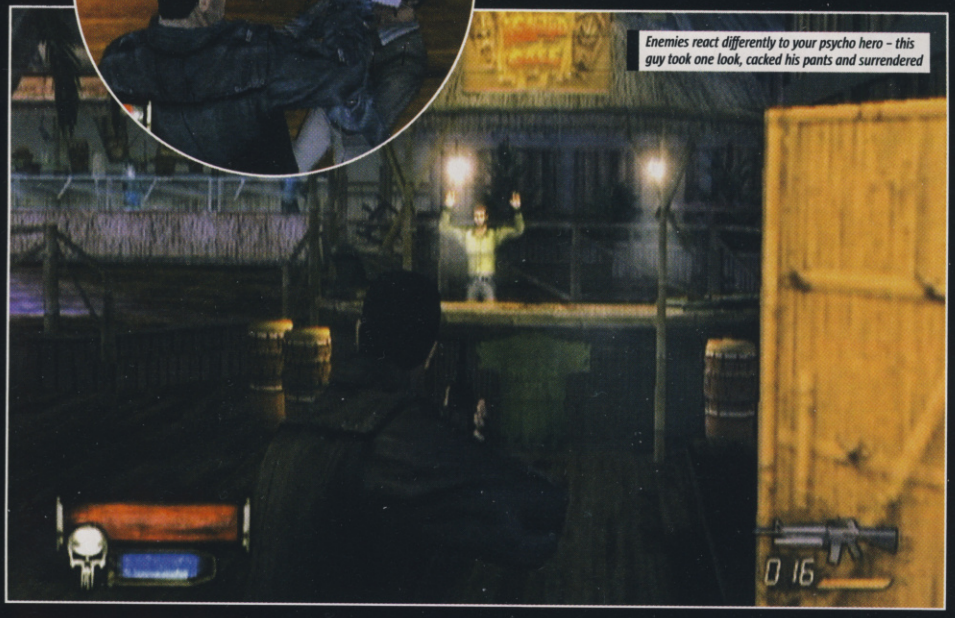

If you blaze out of ammo, you can grab melee weapons like this skull-splitting cleaver. Yuck!


Enemies react differently to your psycho hero – this guy took one look, cacked his pants and surrendered

- PUBLISHER: THQ
- DEVELOPER: VOLITION, INC.
- OUT: Q4 2004

IN A NUTSHELL

Marvel's vigilante comic book avenger brings claret-soaked carnage to the PS2 and Xbox in a brutal bloodbath of third-person shooting action and shocking ultra-violence that, love it or loath it, people are going to talk about.

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

ALSO ON

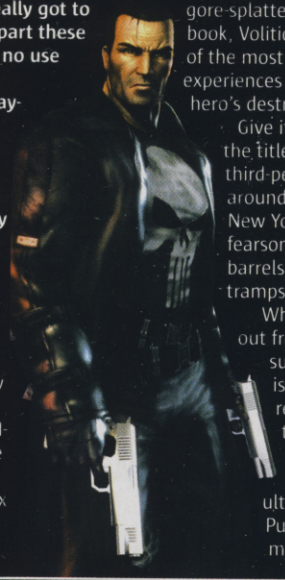
XBOX

WWW.THQ.CO.UK

THE PUNISHER®

If you wanna be a proper crime fighter, you've really got to look the part these days. It's no use you parading round the moonlit city streets in day-glo lycra, wearing Superman-style Y-fronts so tight you could sing soprano. Not unless you want to combat crime by getting the underworld element to laugh themselves to death.

No, the discerning modern day superhero is all about leather, charisma and cold, steely cool. Enter The Punisher, psycho vigilante and cold-blooded killer – this dude packs so much sadistic style he makes the Matrix guys look more like the Teletubbies.



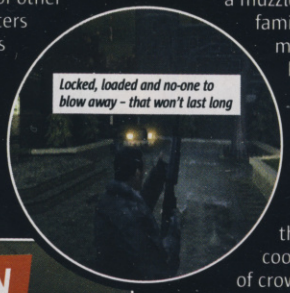
COMIC CARNAGE

With attitude ripped straight from the gore-splattered pages of the Marvel comic book, Volition is hell-bent on creating one of the most gruesomely nasty gaming experiences ever for this ultimate anti-hero's destructive debut.

Give it the once over though and the title looks like a fairly standard third-person blaster – you run around the moody, rain-drenched New York streets, loaded with some fearsome firepower, emptying your barrels faster than a bunch of raging tramps at a beer festival.

What really makes it stand out from the spew of other superhero shooters is how Volition's really gone to town in exploiting the whole ultra-violent Punisher mythos.

Pop caps at twin targets in the flesh-shredding auto-lock slo-mo Slaughter mode


Locked, loaded and no-one to blow away – that won't last long

OVER THE EDGE

In the comic books, our main man's one twisted freakin' mofo – some goons shoved a muzzle in the face of his happy family and pulled the trigger, massacring his wife and kids, turning him into a one-man war on the underworld with a bloodlust for gut-busting brutality.

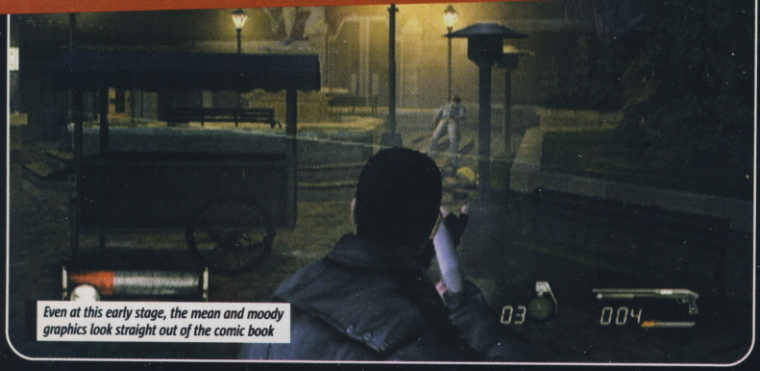
The combat system that's in place to ramp up the uber-violence is pretty cool – alongside your supply of crowd-clearing grenades, the cruel crusader can carry two beefy shooters in his sinewy fists at a time. The weapons range from Ingram and Beretta machine-pistols to pump-action shotguns and rifles.

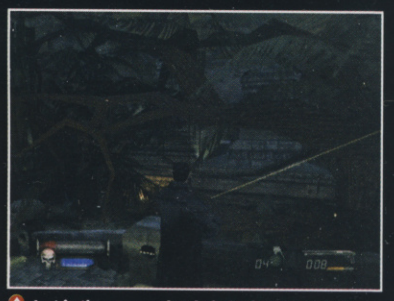
They can be fired independently using the shoulder triggers and mixed and matched at will. It makes for a pretty damned flexible arsenal of destruction. The more lead you bury into enemy flesh, the fuller your Slaughter gauge gets – max it out then unleash your slo-mo Slaughter attack to auto-lock onto two targets at once for some serious artery-bursting carnage.

GENTLE PERSUASION

The cartilage-shredding mayhem doesn't stop there either. You'll need to leach info from the thugs

"VOLITION'S REALLY GONE TO TOWN IN EXPLOITING THE WHOLE ULTRA-VIOLENT PUNISHER MYTHOS"


Even at this early stage, the mean and moody graphics look straight out of the comic book


Just in the museum level alone there's a whole truckload of variety in the scenery

DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES

Goons dumb enough to get in the way of your vengeance are gonna need some persuading if they're going to spill the beans on their bosses.

Aside from the horrific Special Interrogation moves (check the Bloody Hell! box), you've got three standard methods of info extraction.

1 FACE-SMASHING

Mr Head, meet Mr Tarmac – one good hard crack and you'll open his skull like a boiled egg. No soldiers though. How inconsiderate

2 PUNCH

Break some bones or bust some balls with some frenzied fisting action, baby. Look, on-screen prompts even tell you how

3 GUN TENSION

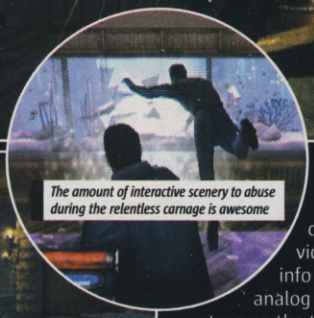
Pull too hard on that trigger and your victim's gonna be scraping his face off the floor, where it won't be too talkative

Swish visual effects like this creeping ground fog crank up the atmospheric tension ten-fold. Brrr!

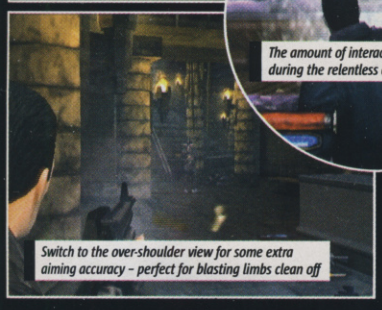
"MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT, THIS STUFF IS FULL-ON, SICKENING BRUTALITY"

Yup, that's right – that wood chipper is just calling out for some flesh-wrenching fun. See the box on the right...

This dude thinks he's one hard mofo – a bullet in the brain'll teach him otherwise



The amount of interactive scenery to abuse during the relentless carnage is awesome



Switch to the over-shoulder view for some extra aiming accuracy – perfect for blasting limbs clean off

you face-off against in order to crack the levels, and it's the unique Interrogation system that leads to all manner of unparalleled grimness.

Key informants are marked by a tiny skull floating above their heads – sneak up, wrestle them into a headlock then select your preferred method of extraction. So far, you can shatter bones with a hefty punch, pound heads into the cold concrete ground and push the action end of your shooter into your victim's face. You can coax info out by wiggling the analog stick, hitting it harder to turn up the tension. Get it right and they'll talk, get it wrong and you'll be looking at a hefty dry-cleaning bill.

SICK LITTLE PUPPY

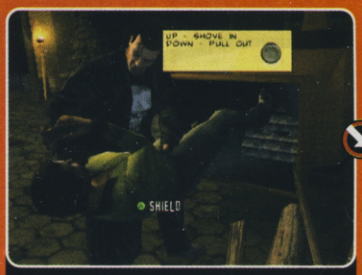
The real nastiness comes in the form of Special Interrogations though. Grab a guy by the gullet and big skulls start appearing alongside the more ominous bits of the scenery. Drag your buddy over and the fun really begins – our fave trick so far is shoving a stooge limb by limb into the wood chipper to get those words tumbling out. Make no mistake about it, this stuff is full-on, sickening brutality. Some of the violence is disturbing enough to make you feel dirty after you dished it out. We pissed our pants laughing at it though, of course.

At this early stage, it's hard to tell if Punisher's got the goods to offer up some fast-paced, frenetic gun-blazing action alongside its stomach-churning shock tactics. We'll keep you fully informed. ✸

BLOODY HELL!

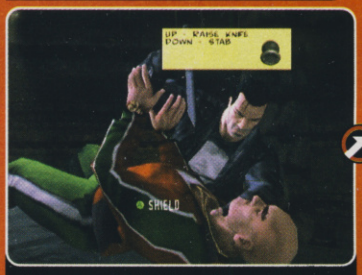
The relentless action in Punisher borders on pure sadism at times. Take the Special Interrogation moves – these are some of the most gruesome gaming gore ever.

Start by getting a victim in a headlock. If a there's a torture tool handy, ignore standard interrogation techniques and drag your victim over for a Special. To make him blab you must jiggle the analog stick, forcing him ever closer to a grisly doom. Get it right an he'll spill the beans, get it wrong and he's toast.



Okay, time to get grim. Grab your guy by the belt buckle and head over to the wood chipper

If gentle persuasion doesn't get the info you want, justice is a mere button-mash away...

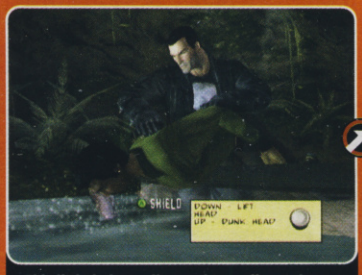


If I were you baldy, I'd be spilling my guts faster than an offal shop in an earthquake

If you're still not happy though, perhaps it's time to try an impromptu tracheotomy

Unforgettably familiar if you've seen American X. Line those teeth up to the concrete and...

...tease out that info with a boot to the back of the head. He ain't gonna look pretty tomorrow



This little baby really caught us off guard. Think he's only in for death by drowning?

Nah-ah. That's a tank of frenzied piranhas down there. Anyone feeling peckish?

GLUTTON FOR PUNISHMENT

Although the game's release is timed to coincide with the Punisher movie starring John "Fat Chops" Travolta later this year, Volition are promising that their baby's going to have much more in common with the original Marvel comic books than the big-screen adaptation.

Punisher fans are already foaming at the mouth over the movie's relocation to Tampa instead of New York, the Punisher's original brooding ground – and this ain't the first time someone's taken liberties with franchise either.

The Punisher started his patchy multimedia career in 1974 as one of Spidey's enemies

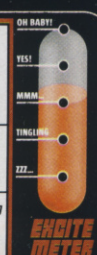
Dolph Lundgren's dodgy 1989 movie adaptation bore little resemblance to the comics

2004's flick looks promising but fan boys hate changes to the Punisher mythology

CVG OPINION Swaggers about with tons of attitude. The extreme violence currently masks a fairly average-looking shooter, but add meat to its blasting bones and who knows? **Matt**

WE LOVE
- *The Punisher's one cool psycho*
- *Pumping two beefy barrels at once*
- *Ultra-violence shames Manhunt*

WE HATE
- *Basic shooting action ain't anything special just yet*
- *Not much objective variety*



PIKMIN 2

- PUBLISHER NINTENDO
- DEVELOPER NINTENDO
- OUT: OCTOBER 10

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Miyamoto's garden-inspired sequel to one of the most colourful and inventive games ever. This time out Captain Olimar gets an assistant, Louie, who shares our hero's love of grunting into his shiny helmet.

AVAILABLE ON

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

WWW.NINTENDO.COM

Some flowers are just there for decoration, no matter how hard you try to attack them

Big, aggressive insects can decimate your troops rapidly so try and take them out super quick

If you think that you've reached a dead-end, look for secret doors for your troops to pull down

Super Mario creator Shigero Miyamoto is such a genius that even his discarded nail clippings are doubtless imbued with magical properties. No surprise then, when in 2002 he turned a simple love of gardening into one of the most compelling and unusual strategy games ever.

At the time, it seemed unbelievable that those more used to shooting up planets with Samus or cracking heads with Super Smash Bros could ever learn to love fooling around in giant interplanetary gardens on Cube. Yet Pikmin was dead successful, partly due to the cute critters themselves and partly due to the fiendishly compelling nature of the puzzles.

WE CAN DIG IT

This time, in one-player mode, it turns out that the company that Captain Olimar works for has got itself into a dirty great debt hole since his last adventure.

A crowd of hopeful Pikmin await their next assignment from Olimar and Louie

Switching between our heroes is easy, but much of the time it pays to keep them together. Aww

The only way in which he can pay off what they owe is to return to Pikmin planet and search for treasures (or 'junk' depending on how passionate you feel about tin cans) to sell off to the highest bidder.

Olimar's assistant, Louie, has now joined him, and is able to command his own little army of Pikmin. In fact, your very first task in this sequel is to somehow get Olimar and Louie to join forces to harness the power of two sets of Pikmin rather than one.

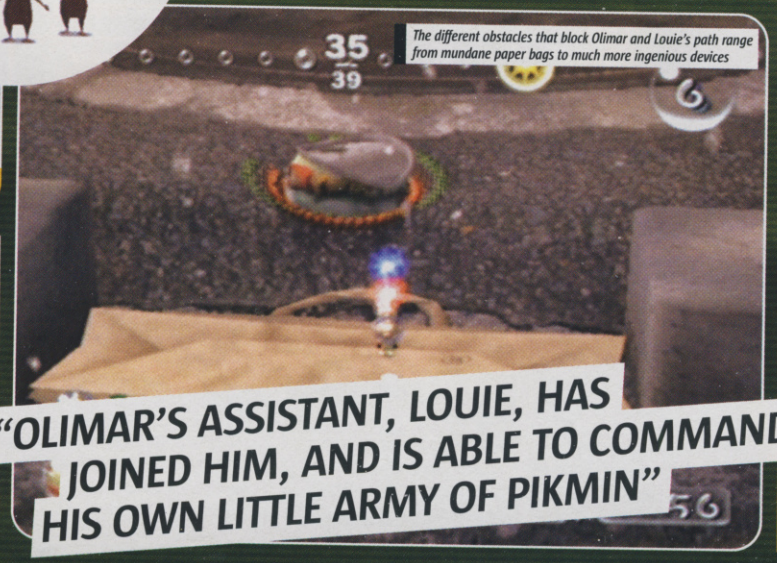
The cutscenes are looking even more spectacular than the first game

Pikmin sweating their stamen off for Oli. Suckers!

SPACE COWBOYS

Once you've managed to reunite Louie and Olimar, switching between the two is a simple matter of pressing 'Y'. From what we've seen so far of the Japanese version of the game it's hard to tell if Louie and Olimar have their own characteristics, or specific Pikmin that only they can use, but doubtless all will become clear in the English language version.

As cool as Olimar and Louie are, it's always going to be the tiny little Pikmin that steal the show. And in this instalment they seem to have even more personality about them. Call us weird, but there's something lovable about the cute way in which their heads tilt in earnest unison as



The different obstacles that block Olimar and Louie's path range from mundane paper bags to much more ingenious devices

"OLIMAR'S ASSISTANT, LOUIE, HAS JOINED HIM, AND IS ABLE TO COMMAND HIS OWN LITTLE ARMY OF PIKMIN"

You'll need five Pikmin to move those flowers

KEPT IN THE DARK

As you explore the planet with your tiny quivering charges in tow you'll come across strange looking portals that will transport Olimar, Louie and their Pikmin into the bowels of the earth.

You can only take a certain number of Pikmin into these dungeons, which makes solving puzzles that little bit harder. But fortunately you don't have to worry about returning to the ship before nightfall, so you can explore at your leisure.

Portals look like crusty anuses and take you to the bowels of the earth. In you go, men

Inside these crevices lots of weird stuff lurks, like giant fruit that grows in the dark

The spaceships can't reach the dungeons, so your Pikmin take booty back to the portable pod

"SOMETIMES THEY MIGHT GO A LITTLE CRAZY AND KICK CRAP OFF ON THEIR OWN ACCORD"

Olimar uses his rocket to travel to different locations on the Pikmin planet's surface

We still haven't figured out exactly why one time they'll attack enemies and gather food off their own bat but won't the next time. Tricky little critters

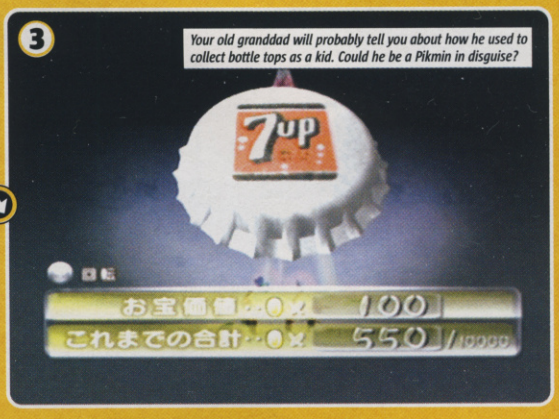
TRASH OR TREASURE

Next time you're strapped for cash, try taking this little lot down to the local pawnshop.

Ok, so they'll probably smack you in the face and push you out the door, but that's because you don't live on Olimar's home planet of Hocotate where they pay big bucks for such junk, er treasure.

Giant batteries, just perfect for that huge vibrator. No wonder they're so valuable

Looks like a fishy old tin to us, but to Olimar and Louie it's a priceless work of art



Your old granddad will probably tell you about how he used to collect bottle tops as a kid. Could he be a Pikmin in disguise?

they dutifully tiptoe after their masters, and something strangely disturbing about the feral, savage way in which they can turn on one of their many enemies that they run into.

Also fresh to Pikmin 2 are two brand new types of the little fellas, in addition to the usual red, yellow and blue. These are the giant purple Pikmin and the poison-resistant white. As ever, they are all there to slavishly obey your every whim in a bid to solve the puzzles and reach the next piece of priceless trash. Sometimes they might go a little crazy and kick crap off on their own accord, but that's all part of the fun.

FLOWER POWER

Everything just got bigger too. The environments are even more beautiful and imaginative, the puzzles are more intriguing and there are now more than 60 different species of enemy to encounter.

What's more, it should play longer as well – now taking at least 30 hours from start to finish, which should go some way towards addressing one of the main criticisms of the original.

Then throw in all-new two-player co-operative and versus modes, and from what we've seen so far, Pikmin 2 should be a ton of fun and could well be one of the most absorbing games on Cube this year. ✷

Carry hapless bugs back to the spaceship to convert them into more Pikmin. Faster, you ho's

We're not sure what's going on here but we blame those bloody Teletubbies. Hug!

When the sun gauge at the top of the screen crosses over to the right it means your time is nearly up, so get a move on!

Sneak up behind the dozing bug and catch it by surprise

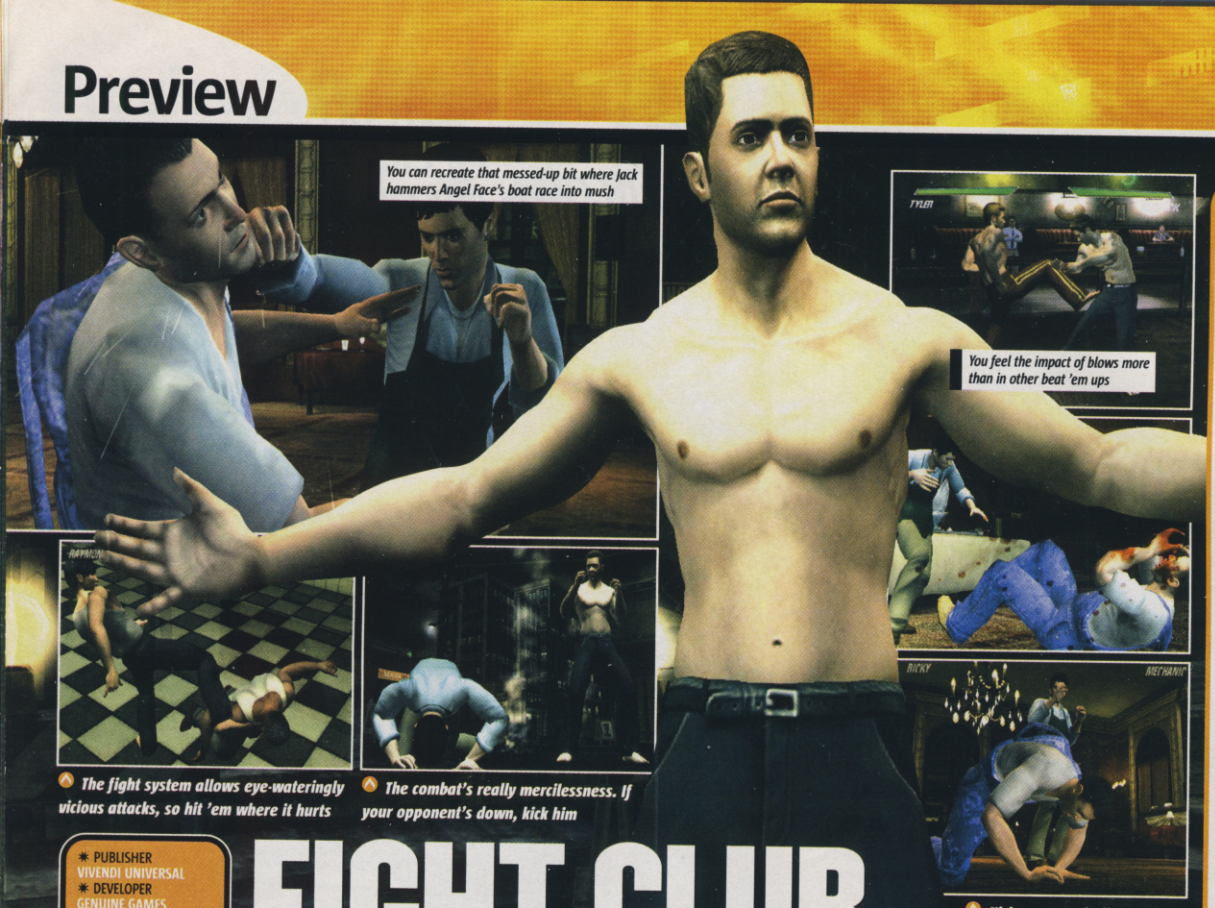
This is where you go to get all your fresh young Pikmin. You can also keep spare ones stored in the spaceship

CVG OPINION Bigger, better and brighter than the original in every way. We'd forgotten how much we loved ordering little slaves around. If only Pikmin really existed. **Maura**

WE LOVE
- Cute Pikmin and chirpy singalongs
- Dungeons where time stands still
- Being a bastard slave master

WE HATE
- Time limits sometimes very harsh
- Turning off our Cube to sleep
- Pikmin dying without permission

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...



The fight system allows eye-wateringly vicious attacks, so hit 'em where it hurts

The combat's really mercilessness. If your opponent's down, kick him

Kick some capitalist ass but remember: YOU ARE NOT YOUR F***ING KHAKIS!

FIGHT CLUB

- PUBLISHER: VIVENDI UNIVERSAL
- DEVELOPER: GENUINE GAMES
- OUT: NOVEMBER

IN A NUTSHELL

The first rule of Fight Club is that you kick the crap out of anyone with the balls to get in the ring with you. Old-skool one-on-one ass-kicking with the movie licence providing some stylish grit to bring out the Irish pikey in you.

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

ALSO ON

XBOX

WWW.FIGHTCLUBGAME.COM

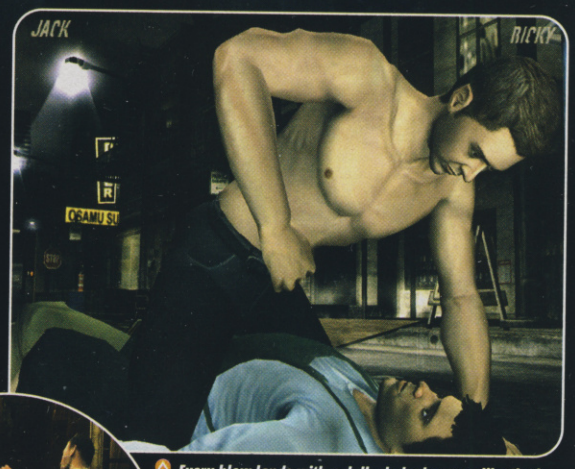
UPDATE

You're going to hear a lot of people moaning on about this game. "It shows a fundamental misunderstanding of the Fight Club licence and trivialises the anti-capitalist themes explored so effectively in the movie blah blah blah..."

Bollocks. Everyone seems to have forgotten that Fight Club featured some of the most meat-fisted punch-ups ever. And don't give us that crap about anti-capitalism: the movie was a huge commercial success (helped in no small part by having two of Hollywood's biggest box-office draws in lead roles), and proudly sported product placement like post-fight black eyes.

So don't judge Fight Club on its licence. Judge it on how successfully it splinters your nose with its hard-hitting beat 'em up gameplay.

Structurally it's familiar. There are ten characters to choose from including Tyler, Jack, Angel Face, Robert Paulson, and, um, a mechanic. Each has a particular fighting style and basic skill sets.



Every blow lands with a dull, sledgehammer-like thud

Brutal power moves like elbows and knees keep the scrapping down and dirty

The facial damage model is great. If you're getting creamed you can see it

THIS IS YOUR LIFE

The action takes place in scuzzy backstreet alleys and basements with fellow Fight Club members hollering at you from the sidelines. It plays like Tekken or Soulcalibur, with full 3D movement. You can wade in with strikes or use ducks, dodges and sidesteps to flummox your opponent.

But like the movie, the emphasis is on venting your masculine rage by smacking the crap out of your mates. There's no finesse to the fighting – it's unashamedly ham-fisted and wants you to revel in the way you're pounding flesh into moist, faceless meat. Consequently the control system's more on the button-bashing side, so we do have doubts about the long-term appeal.

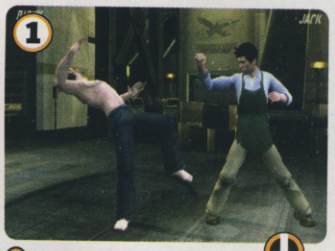
But in the short-term the gore is stunning. Catch a sucker with a sweet hook or a swinging roundhouse and blood will splatter across the screen. You can wallop heads off scenery like car bonnets and dumpsters. Bruises, welts and gashes develop on faces Fight Night-style, and when you savagely snap a bone you're treated to an X-ray close-up of the shattered limb. Crunchy.

It's a refreshingly brutal and gory experience, and the extreme use of blood and bone-snapping hammers home the violence. It's nowhere near as deep as Tekken, Virtua Fighter 4 or Soulcalibur, but there's a disturbingly bloody attraction to Fight Club that, coupled with the cool movie licence, makes it a beat 'em up to keep a black eye on. ✷

BREAKING POINT

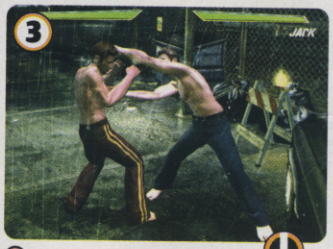
Fight Club pisses on the Queensberry Rules. If you want to lay the hurt on your opponent, don't be a gentleman – snap some bone!

You can grab arms, legs, necks, backs, and most eye-wateringly of all, shins, and splinter them like balsa wood. It doesn't stop the fight but the damaged limb will flop around uselessly, giving you a killer advantage.



Once your opponent's vulnerable you'll have to time your attack right...

...if you nail the button combo you'll get an X-ray view of the snappage!



There are eight bones you can break, or you can just shatter some face...

...by slamming your mate's kisser into a car bonnet. Instant nose job

CVG OPINION

We're not convinced about the depth of the fighting engine or the long-term appeal of Story mode, but we love the bare-knuckle brutality of the scrapping. **Graeme**

WE LOVE
- Blood, gore, hardcore violence
- Cool licence means wicked lo-fi style
- Breaking bones feels awesome

WE HATE
- Shallow fight mechanics
- Button bashing encouraged
- Feels a bit limited at the moment

147 in 5min 20secs

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"The most realistic snooker simulation ever" P2 Magazine

"So convincing you might have to check the television hasn't turned itself over to BBC 2" Official Xbox Mag

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BURNOUT 3

"SO QUICK IT'LL RIP THE POS SHIRT OFF YOUR BACK AND SINGE YOUR NIP HAIR!"

JUST LOOK AT IT! The flames, the speed blur, the dust, the sparks! And breath...

Online Road Rage multiplayer sees a team of Racers trying to stop a team of Racers from finishing

- PUBLISHER: EA
- DEVELOPER: CRITERION GAMES
- OUT: SEPTEMBER
- ONLINE GAMING
- x8

IN A NUTSHELL

No-holds-barred chassis-ripping street racing in rush hour traffic, with the option to spin out in slo-mo and take your opponents with you. Now road rage isn't just encouraged, it's essential – both off and online!

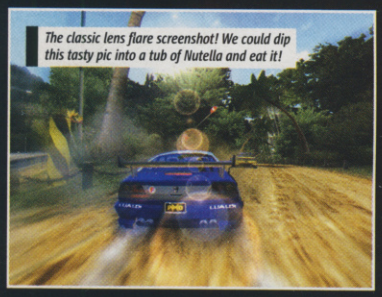
AVAILABLE ON

PS2

ALSO ON

XBOX

WWW.EAGAMES.COM/REDESIGN/GAMES/PS2/BURNOUT3/HOME.JSP


The classic lens flare screenshot! We could dip this tasty pic into a tub of Nutella and eat it!

If Burnout 2 was running on nitros, Burnout 3 feels like it's packing twin jet engines under the hood and is powered by rocket fuel! It's so quick it'll rip the shirt off your back and singe your nip hair!

Here's why it's so friggin' nippy: the fastest car in Burnout 2 is now the slowest in part three! And there are 70 of these monster motors to unlock, including brand new Indy and F1-style cars that threaten to go supersonic around every bend and shatter your TV screen. We're not pulling your pole when we say that it feels almost as quick as F-Zero GX on GameCube!

But it's what developer Criterion has done with those insane speeds this time round that really makes it such a standout arcade racer. Burnout 3 doesn't tread on Midight Club 3's turf or try to imitate Need For Speed 2. It does its own crazy thing, away from the whole car modding scene, and gives you instant on and offline thrills with a brilliantly perverse twist...

See, Burnout's changed! Now it's all about being the most aggressive a-hole imaginable and obliterating your fellow racers with wild Takedowns, Slams, sideswipes and shunts! You can't afford NOT to drive dirty. It's survival of the fastest and the fiercest!

TEST OVER-DRIVE

This month, we shot down the motorway in Graeme's Nissan Sunny to EA's headquarters in the badlands of Surrey and caned Burnout 3 for a day.

We hammered the single-player, blazed through all the new modes, including the newly souped-up Crash mode, and even slapped the crap out of some cocky Spanish journos in eight-player online heats!

So you know it's fast and aggressive, but what we haven't told you yet is that it's wicked.

Even the straightforward single-player races are insane. We popped off to a scorching start in our first meet, but the AI drivers are crazy sons of bitches this time. They'll do anything to crush your car down to the side of a squished Coke can. That's when your driving morals suddenly fly out the sunroof and the adrenaline kicks in.

Burnout's famous risk-reward system is still in place – weaving through head-on traffic, pulling near misses and dangerous driving gain you a little bit of boost juice. However, now you only get decent chunks of juice by

Sideswipe enemy drivers as you blaze through barriers and take hidden shortcuts

THE SCENE OF THE CRIME

Criterion looked at explosive Hollywood car chase movies for inspiration in Burnout 3, and all the settings are based on real cities like Hong Kong, Chicago and Monaco.

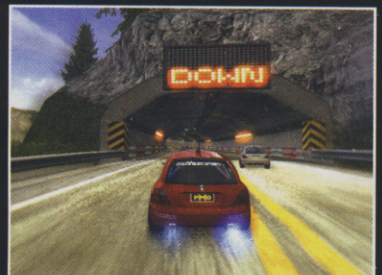
A no-speed-limit German Autobahn was the blueprint for this unholy speed zone

The San Diego-based tracks are famous for their neck-jerkingly tight bends

It's not all tarmac and flat roads. Burnout 3 goes off-road this time out!

The Burnout boost bar actually burns this time. Play nasty and watch it sizzle

Slam opponents into static objects on the track

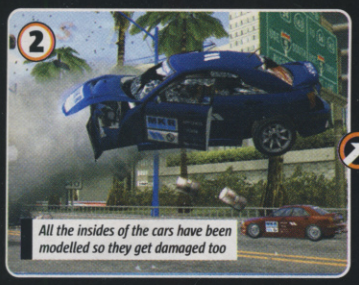


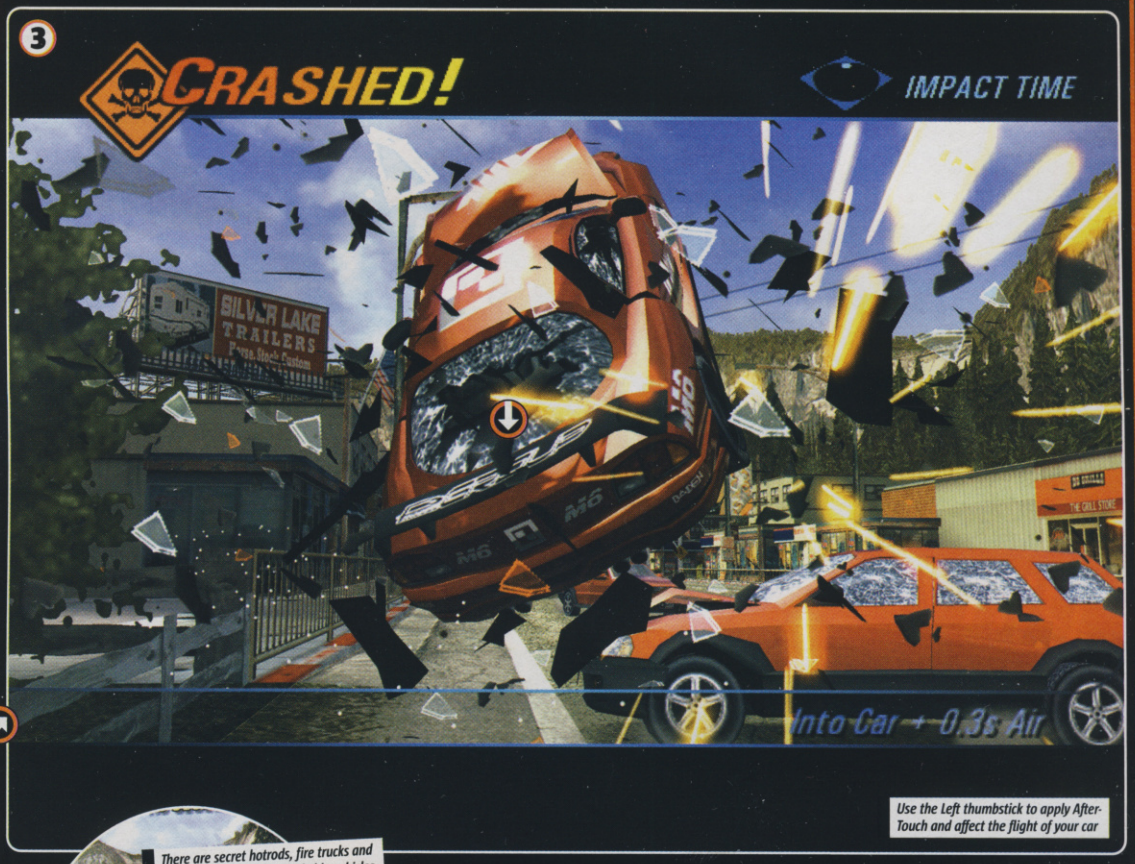
Causing crashes inside tunnels is awesome. Cars ping off the walls like popcorn

IT'S CRUNCH TIME!

Even though Criterion has introduced heaps of new stuff into Burnout 3, we still can't get enough of the famously outrageous crashes and smashes. And now they're even more catastrophic than before!

Sparks fizz off the bodywork, cars rip in half and they even explode if you mash them hard enough. Plough into a truck with a flammable payload and it'll instantly go up like an atom bomb! Plus there's no loss of detail in the multiplayer online action. Sweet!





ramming your opponents off the road in spectacular fashion. And when you do, they get mega pissed off.

There's a yellow position logo floating above each car, but when you take an AI car out it turns red, and these angry buggers try even harder to tear you to pieces! It's a brilliant balance – you've got to be offensive the whole way, or you end up looking like a sucka, getting burned and at the back of the pack. It's brutal!

STREET SIGNS

As well as instinctive Takedowns, there are Signature Takedowns! These occur at certain points on a track, and if you nail one your boost bar and score storm up. We pulled off one Signature Takedown that saw us Slam a driver off a cliff at the perfect moment, sending his car tumbling and crumbling in slow-mo to the great big scrapyard in the sky!

Sure you can trigger slow-mo to revel in your victim's demise, but it serves a new purpose in Burnout 3. When you've been Slammed you can hit the slow-mo button to apply After-Touch during your crash. This enables you to turn the car in the air – not ridiculous amounts, it still looks believable – and try to take out other cars with you!

After-Touch works especially well in the new Crash mode where you're trying to cause unholy pile-ups at over 100 unlockable junctions. Say you're driving into oncoming traffic and clip a lorry – it jack-knifes spilling its payload across the road – but instead of your car skidding wildly forwards you can affect its angle slightly with After-Touch, sending it across to the traffic on the other side of the road. This adds to the chaos and makes for an even more spectacular smash scene.

Then there's the online co-op Crash mode. See, every single-player option in Burnout 3 is available online! In this mode two of you have to talk and plan if you're going to orchestrate the most insane pile-up possible. Because in co-op if one of you hits a power-up and the other doesn't the power-up doesn't work!

It's a slick idea that forces you to co-operate and makes it even more intense because you feel like a right nob if you're the one who screws up.

Criterion's newest road-rager definitely doesn't play nice. It's brash, offensive, and over the legal limit. That's why we can't wait for it to smash into stores this September. ✷

CVG OPINION No arcade racer has ever made driving dirty feel so exciting or explosive. Cold, calculated, cut-throat fun, and with After-Touch it couldn't be any better! **Mike**

WE LOVE
- Aggressive Takedowns!
- Collisions look utterly amazing
- Every mode is online

WE HATE
- You still can't save your crashes

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...

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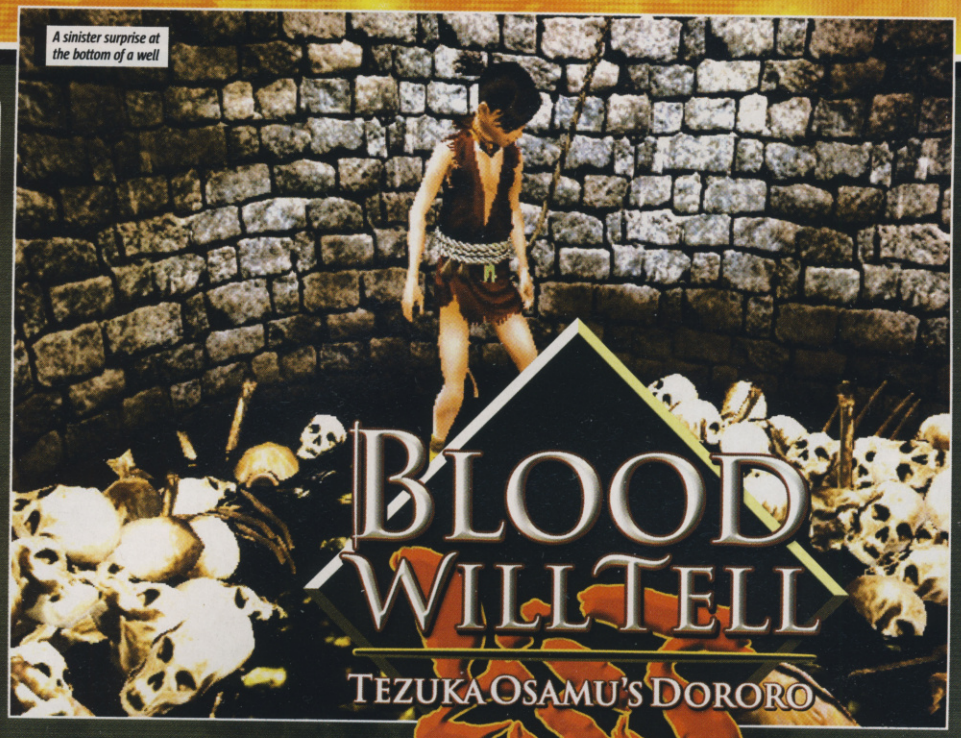


- PUBLISHER: SEGA
- DEVELOPER: SEGA WOW
- OUT: WINTER

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Samurai hack 'n' slasher based on a classic manga, so that means a bonkers story and action that will get comic geeks foaming with anticipation. And that's before you fire off the gun mounted in your leg.

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

WWW.SEGA-EUROPE.COM

Dororo's mini quests are more sedate and offer a little bit of a breather

Maybe this boss could lend Hyakkimaru a hand, geddit? Looks like he has a few to spare!

Blood will tell what? We don't get it – talk about all-time strange game names. What will blood tell? It's driving us nuts!

The only way we're going to find out is to play Sega's new samurai slasher based on a classic manga by renowned Japanese author Osamu Tezuka, the creator of Astro Boy. Goddamn!

With Blood Will Tell you're guaranteed two things. The first is a weird storyline that will have you excited and confused in equal measure. The second is lots of action as a result of the bonkers story, so let's look at that a little bit more.

BLOODY MARVELLOUS

You play Hyakkimaru, a samurai with a shocking secret, on a quest to uncover his mysterious past and regain his humanity. As a newborn baby Hyakkimaru was robbed of every limb and organ on his body. Now, of course, he wants them back!

As luck would have it, the same demon that stole our hero's limbs had the foresight to replace the stolen parts with weapons instead. This makes Hyakkimaru the most lethal killer with a murky past and strange body parts since X-Men's Wolverine. For example, instead of arms Hyakkimaru has swords, and where his knee should be he boasts a handy bazooka!

Assisting our limb-challenged samurai is a small girl named Dororo, who also gets to dish out punishment to the demons that stand in their way, albeit in less bizarre fashion. With simple commands you can instruct Dororo to fight alongside you or to defend herself. A second player can also control her stone-throwing antics in a two-player co-op mode. Gaps in the action allow Dororo to enjoy mini quests that rely on puzzle solving more than knee bazooka-ing action.

Like all hack and slash affairs it's the bloodletting that's the star of the show, and the combat side of the action is well worked with tasty combos served up with the minimum of fuss. As for that title – nope, still don't get it! ✷

THE FIRST CUT IS THE DEEPEST

Despite the 3D looks, Blood Will Tell is very linear, making it practically a scrolling beat 'em up. As with all beat 'em ups, getting the right boss to battle is essential to success.

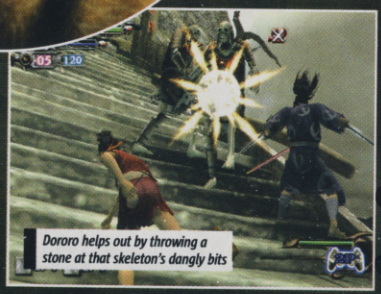
Just look at the difference between Devil May Cry and its sequel if you don't believe us. With well-dwelling bog monsters and demonic deities, BWT looks to have a decent mix.

Please sir, can I have my limbs back?

There's something you don't see every day

Hyakkimaru fires some more cartilage from his knee bazooka

Tense, blinding headache? Try CVG Samurai-profen. Sharp sword, back of neck = cured!


Dororo helps out by throwing a stone at that skeleton's dangly bits

That's a nice side parting the demon is sporting

CVG OPINION

The hack 'n' slash side works well, providing plenty of enjoyable action. Coupled with the very bizarre plot, Blood Will Tell is definitely one to watch. **Alex H**

WE LOVE
- A hero with a bazooka in his knee
- Dororo complementing the action
- Awesome CG work between levels

WE HATE
- Camera angles can make some battles difficult to navigate
- The early enemies aren't all that

Characters are nimbler than a barefoot ballerina on hot coals

While past Vattic's got brawns, present Vattic's got to rely on his cunning and kooky powers

Once you've locked your sights on an enemy, you can adjust your aim for more deadly accuracy

- PUBLISHER CODEMASTERS
- DEVELOPER FREE RADICAL
- OUT: Q3 2004

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

The TimeSplitters team piles on the conspiracy theories in this impressively original and promising psychic stealth and shoot 'em up. Blast your enemies using a range of hefty weapons and the power of your own mind.

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

ALSO ON

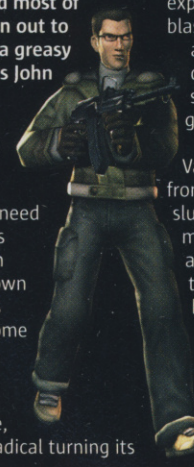
XBOX, CUBE

WWW.CODEMASTERS.CO.UK/SECONDSIGHT/

SECOND SIGHT

Usually, when the CVG boys wake up bloody and bewildered, it's after a hard night down the boozer and most of the mysterious stains turn out to be rogue drippings from a greasy kebab. Not Second Sight's John Vattic though – it seems someone's been tampering with his brain and, boy, is he mad.

If you've not heard of Second Sight yet, all you need to know to get your chops slathering is that it's fresh from the genius minds down at Free Radical – the guys responsible for the awesome TimeSplitters series!

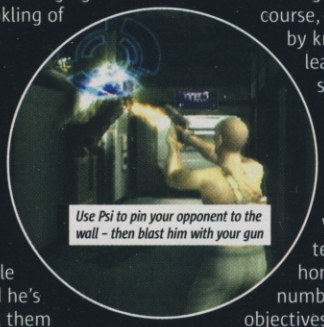


RADICAL DEPARTURE

Shunning its FPS heritage, Second Sight sees Free Radical turning its attention to the action adventure genre – and, if what we've seen so far is anything to go by, its knack for stunning game design is here is spades. This stunner expertly crams elements of frantic blasting, tense stealth, challenging adventure and a sprinkling of chilling horror into its simmering stew of gameplay gumbo.

It turns out that Vattic not only wakes from his troubled slumber with half his memory missing, but all that cranial tinkering has landed him with unimaginable psychic powers – and he's going to need to flex them like crazy if he's going to get his identity back and work out just what the hell's going on.

As you get deeper into the twisting conspiracy, your amazing mental abilities evolve. So far we've seen Vattic's regenerating power which pumps your body back up to full health but leaves you vulnerable to attacks, as well as a devastating psychic burst that'll knock your enemies flat. Plus there's a Charm move that fools your foes into thinking you're not there. Of course, if you give yourself away by knocking into things or leaving footprints in the snow, for instance, your cover's blown and you'd better be ready to fight.



Use Psi to pin your opponent to the wall – then blast him with your gun

SIMPLE PSI-MAN

The most impressive of Vattic's powers is his telekinesis. This lets you home in on any of the huge number of interactive objectives around the environments and lift, toss or otherwise manipulate them at will. This leads to some incredibly open-ended puzzle-solving across the hugely non-linear levels.

At one point, we stumbled across a guard blocking our path and were amazed at the number of ways we could proceed! Using our Psi we knocked out the surveillance camera to stick a bullet in his head undetected, but then had equal

"SECOND SIGHT'S ALREADY LOOKING SLICKER THAN A LUBRICATED EEL IN AN OIL WELL"

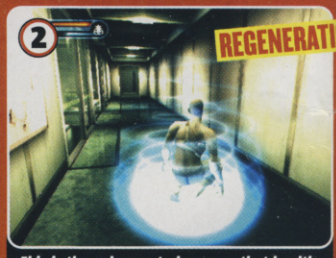
The cartoony graphics will be familiar to Timesplitters fans but they're still pretty blinding

YOU MENTALIST

Harnessing the crazy new power of his mangled brain, Vattic can unleash all manner of psychic vengeance on anything that gets in his way.

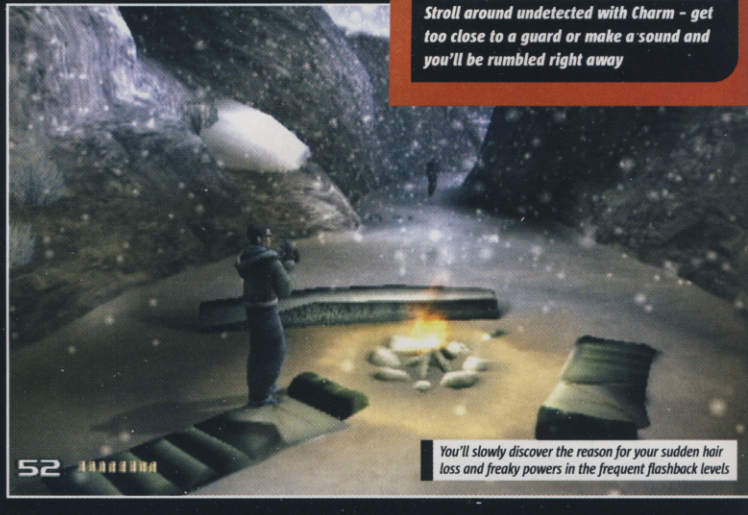
The Psi Blast you start with is great, but it's the fancy stuff you learn as the game progresses that really helps in your quest for the truth.

Wrench a massive wad of energy out the air using only your insaniac brain, and lobby it guard-wards to knock 'em off their feet



This is the only way to bump up that health meter as Psi Vattic – you'll be vulnerable as hell though while he summons the energy

Stroll around undetected with Charm – get too close to a guard or make a sound and you'll be rumbled right away

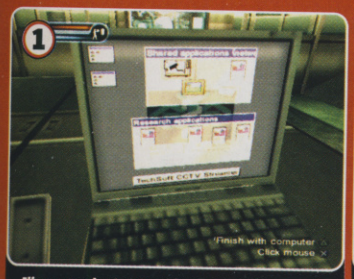


You'll slowly discover the reason for your sudden hair loss and freaky powers in the frequent flashback levels

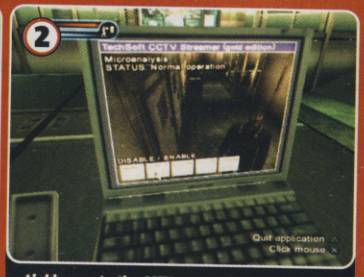
"FREE RADICAL'S FPS EXPERTISE SHINES THROUGH IN THE HI-OCTANE ACTION PORTIONS OF THE GAME"

YOU LITTLE TINKER

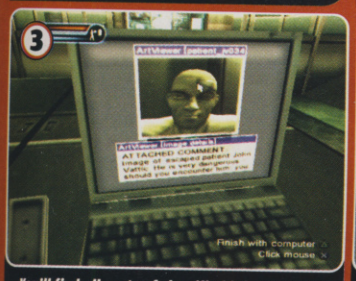
The game's full of cool little details – like the fully playable arcade machines and this computer terminal that lets you have a right good mess with all the programmes and files hidden on its hard drive.



Flip open a laptop to gain access to its secrets – wonder if there's any porn on there...

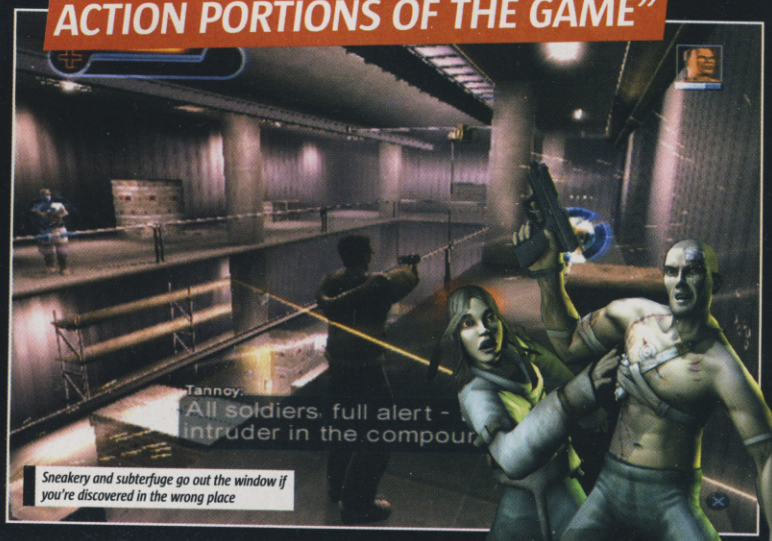


Linking up to the CCTV system lets you disable the cameras and sneak undetected



You'll find all sorts of classified info revealing the dark secrets of your mysterious past

You don't carry your own map so be sure to explore every nook and cranny here



Sneakery and subterfuge go out the window if you're discovered in the wrong place

AS YOU LIKE IT

The wealth of ways you can tackle the different situations that Second Sight chucks at you is freakin' amazing.

Most of the main level objectives have a variety of solutions leading to their completion. In the Research Facility we explored, Vattic could either frisk the guards until he found a keycard to progress, or solve a lengthy set of tasks to sneak into the Records Room via a back entrance. Not only that, the fully interactive environments can be variously exploited to overcome just about any obstacle the game slings at you along the way.

HAVE A FIDDLE

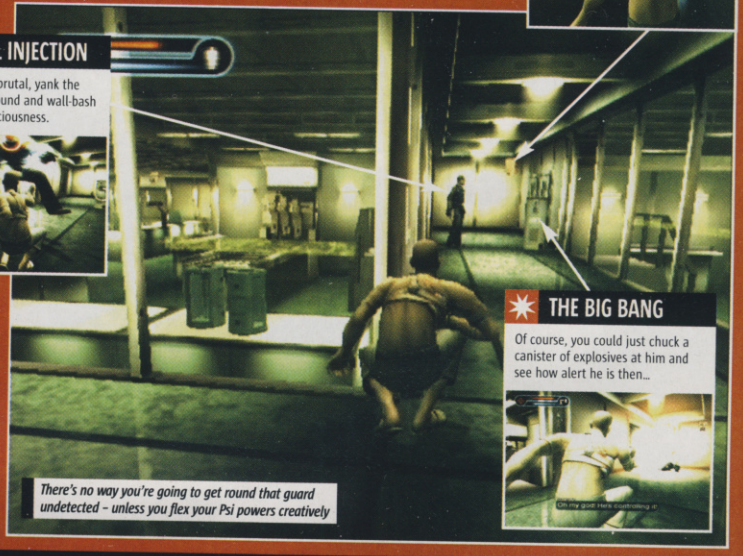
Mess around with the surveillance camera to freak him out, then sneak past quietly as you can...

LETHAL INJECTION

If you're feeling brutal, yank the guard off the ground and wall-bash him into unconsciousness.

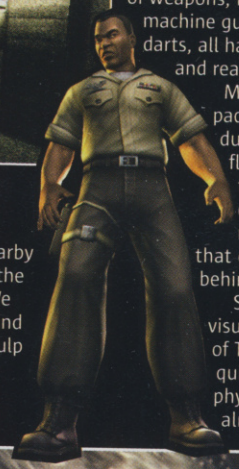
THE BIG BANG

Of course, you could just chuck a canister of explosives at him and see how alert he is then...



There's no way you're going to get round that guard undetected – unless you flex your Psi powers creatively

Use up all your Psi and the picture goes all wobbly like a dodgy telly



expertise shines through in the hi-octane action portions of the game too, with the huge array of weapons, ranging from sub-machine guns to tranquilliser darts, all handling distinctively and realistically.

Most of the pistol-packing antics occur during the inspired flashback sequences throughout the game – entire levels set in Vattic's mysterious military past that gradually reveal the truth behind his nightmarish present.

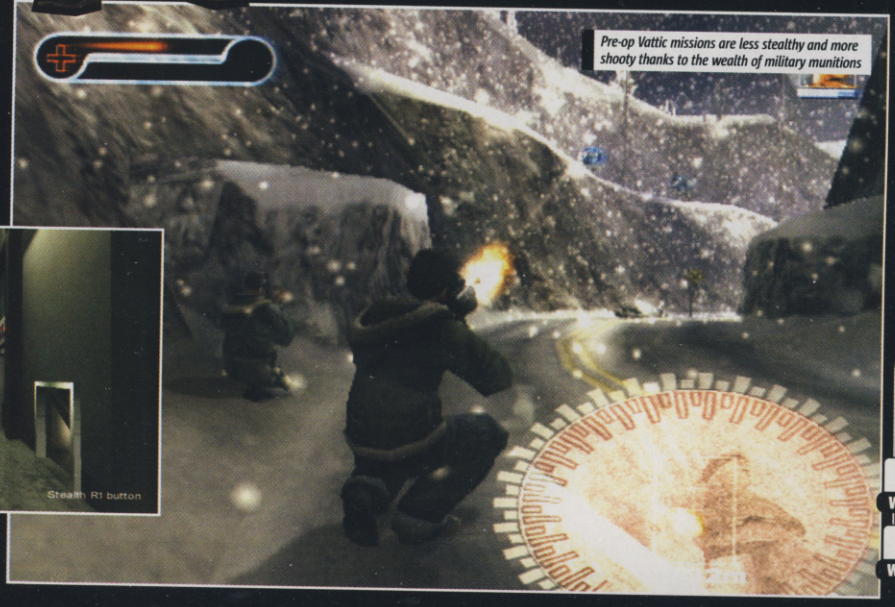
Sporting the same cartoony visuals and flawless animation of TimeSplitters, alongside a quite simply gobsmacking physics engine, Second Sight's already looking slicker than a lubricated eel in an oil well. Couple this with the gripping corkscrew plot and genuinely innovative Psi stuff and we're already drooling at the prospect of getting our hands on the finished game.

success by slowly shifting a nearby crate into the next room until the guard inquisitively followed. We could even lift him off the ground and beat him into a drooling pulp against the wall!

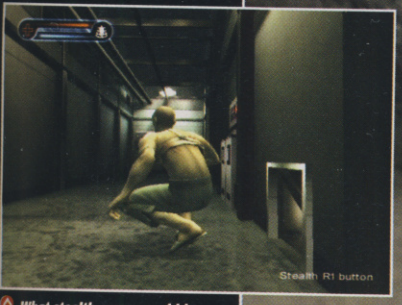
CAP-POPPIN' CONSPIRACY

The final game promises tons of these situations, which should mean a monumental degree of replayability as you'll never have to do things the same way twice.

It's not all about spooky subterfuge, though. Free Radical's first-person shooter



Pre-op Vattic missions are less stealthy and more shooty thanks to the wealth of military munitions



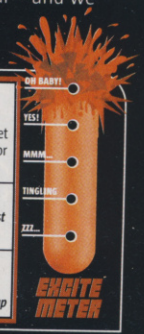
What stealth game would be complete without a wealth of air ducts to shimmy along?

Currently, all eyes seeem to be focused on Free Radical's highly anticipated upcoming TimeSplitters sequel but, the way things are shaping up, Second Sight's going to make just as much of an impact when it arrives later this year – and we don't have to be psychic to tell you that. ✷

CVG OPINION The blazing gunplay and psychic stealth elements are gelling fantastically. Set to provide some top adventuring action – or it'll be a goddam conspiracy! **Matt**

WE LOVE
- *Refreshingly original psychic slant*
- *The freedom to tackle things in just about any way you want*

WE HATE
- *Switching between your weapons and Psi is still a bit fiddly*
- *Levels can be confusing with no map*



1 "Keeping passing cars!", says the missus. "Shut your goddamn trap", you reply

OutRun 2

- PUBLISHER SEGA
- DEVELOPER AM2/SUMO DIGITAL
- OUT WINTER
- x4

IN A NUTSHELL

The official sequel to Sega's monster 80's arcade hit. Take the wheel of a classic Ferrari and race cross-country, impressing the lady by your side. Given the original's legendary status, we're surprised a sequel took this long.

AVAILABLE ON

XBOX

WWW.SEGA-EUROPE.COM

UPDATE

With the impending Gran Turismo 4 and a glut of copycat technical racers waiting in the wings, it's refreshing to see that some developers haven't abandoned the old-fashioned arcade style racer.

OutRun is a 17 year-old arcade legend famous for its flashy hydraulic-pumped cabinet and pedal-to-the-metal adrenaline-fuelled gameplay.

The concept was simple – drive a Ferrari Testarossa across US highways as fast as possible, keeping an eye on the strict time limit. Reach a checkpoint to increase your time limit then, when the road forks, choose the route you want to take through the game. Easy.

Flash forward to the present and nothing much has changed, apart from the hardware. So, after a brief stint in the arcades, OutRun 2 is now racing towards the Xbox, jammed with plenty of home extras to give the arcade game's meagre replay value a kick up the exhaust.

Your chick ain't happy with your driving. Sort it out or she'll go find another ride

Each stage feels very different, complete with a different weather system

MAGICAL SOUND SHOWER

Like its ancestor, OutRun 2 boasts the same branching route system, but now there's a wider choice of Ferraris and several game new modes. Alongside the Arcade mode there's Time Attack and Heart Attack. The latter is great fun – here's why.

The hot chick buckled up next to you yells out instructions such as "Pass cars" or "Slide more." Stick to what she says and you'll win her over by collecting hearts. The more you get the more impressed she becomes until... Well, you'll have to wait.

And if that's not enough, there's also the new Mission Mode, a collection of 101 challenges that unlock cool secrets.

But what impresses most about OutRun 2 is how much it feels like the original, yet still provides the thrills of a cutting-edge racer. Remixed versions of tunes from the original soundtrack will get older gamers teary-eyed, as will the familiarity of some of the stages, especially the beachside highway that boasts exactly the same road layout as the original.

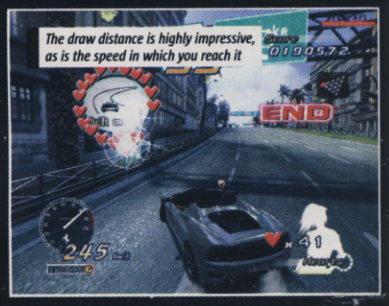
So, plenty of bucket-seat thrills to keep you burning rubber for weeks, even if you've never heard of the crusty original. *

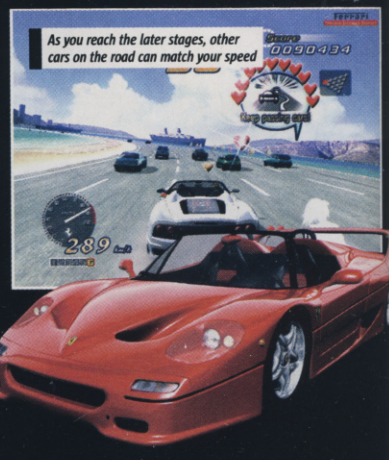
JUST SLIDE

The key to success in OutRun 2 lies in the ability to gracefully power-slide your way around tight turns and hairpin bends.

Just like the rest of the game it's all done in the simplest way possible. Finger off the gas, apply the brake, turn and re-apply gas and you can send your Ferrari skidding sideways through chicanes like you're Michael Schumacher. It's not enough to beat checkpoint times in an arcade racer like this – the secret of a real victory is to look good while doing it.

But it's a whole different story trying to power-slide when there's traffic





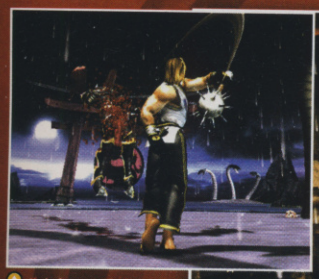
CVG OPINION

It's not cutting edge but OutRun 2 has a certain level of arcade magic missing in most modern racers. Could be a winner if Mission Mode is exciting enough. **Alex H**

WE LOVE
- Classic arcade gameplay that works
- Ace to hear the classic soundtrack
- Mission Mode should add longevity

WE HATE
- Only 15 stages, just like the original
- Cars don't handle very differently
- You can't play as the hot girl!

MORTAL KOMBAT® DECEPTION



He's just made jam out of his gooseberries. He got the recipe off his nan

It's the most gorgeous-looking Mortal Kombat ever – just look at the blood slicks!

We think that this magic trick is going to end up very messy

- PUBLISHER: MIDWAY
- DEVELOPER: MIDWAY
- OUT: AUTUMN

IN A NUTSHELL

The Mortal Kombat series continues, but there's more play for your pounds here, with the introduction of some strange new mini-games alongside the usual Fatalities. Anyone fancy a game of chess?!

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

ALSO ON

XBOX

WWW.MIDWAY.COM

UPDATE

Deception promises to be unlike any Mortal Kombat you've seen before. But before we move onto the big surprise, here's what to expect in the more conventional side of the game.

There are a number of new additions to Kombat's brand of beat 'em up in Deception that look set to redefine the fighting action for a new legion of fans. New multi-tiered levels play out similar to Dead Or Alive 2, with characters being thrown off cliffs or through windows to a lower section of the level, where the fight continues in new surroundings.

Hot Spots appear to be just that – designated areas of a level that, if trodden on, can cause a character to meet with a grisly demise via a sadistic torture device. There's also the addition of weapons in each fight arena. Now you have the choice: do you pummel away at your opponent with your fists and kicks, or do you go for the sword?

MORE MORTAL

With the fighting side of the action tweaked just enough to be tantalising, the big addition in Deception is a selection of mini-games using some familiar characters. Konquest is an adventure game that follows a young hero as he learns how to fight from the Mortal Kombat masters. It may not be for long-time fans, but it serves as a fun training mode. Chess Kombat is played on a board; as you unlock new characters in the main game they also appear here, their new abilities actually affecting the strategy.

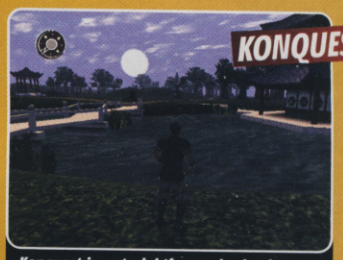
Finally, there's Puzzle Kombat, which clearly treads on Puzzle Fighter territory. Just like Capcom's mini gem, Puzzle Kombat proves itself to be a very competent puzzler and also highly addictive.

Fans will either be shocked or smiling at the prospect of these mini marvels. What is certain is that it's elevated Deception from being another beat 'em up sequel to something with a few new tricks up its sleeves. Even if some of them are borrowed! ✷

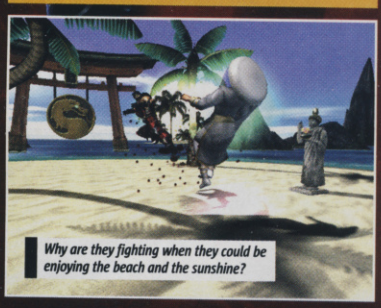
KONQUEST

It appears to be a third-person adventure, but essentially Konquest is a training mode ideal for MK novices who are struggling to get to grips with the long move lists.

Try simple puzzles such as collecting items for characters blocking your path, before you move onto the next teacher and learn new moves.



Konquest is a straightforward role-player using the Mortal Kombat characters



Why are they fighting when they could be enjoying the beach and the sunshine?

CHESS KOMBAT

There's more emphasis on strategy in this mini-game as the roster of fighters from Deception line up for a unique battle.

You have to pay attention to the health bars of your fighters, the front row of each set and the pawns, as well as the back rows. Some characters can even cast spells!

It's like chess, but with Fatalities and zingy graphics flying about

PUZZLE KOMBAT

It's a Tetris-style block battler, as you carefully clear your side of the screen of the tumbling blocks and then dump them in your opponent's half.

There's also a super-move that can be unleashed once the energy bar is full that can mess up your opponent's strategy and hamper their chance of winning. If you can't beat 'em, beat 'em up instead...

If it worked for Street Fighter then why not Mortal Kombat?

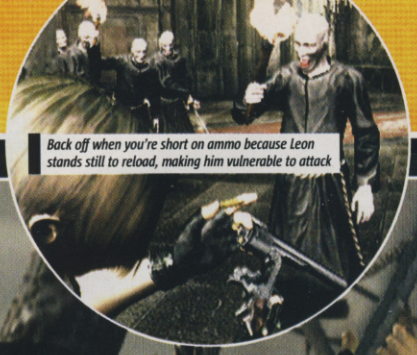
This looks like a survival mode with new competitors unleashed from their cages

CVG OPINION

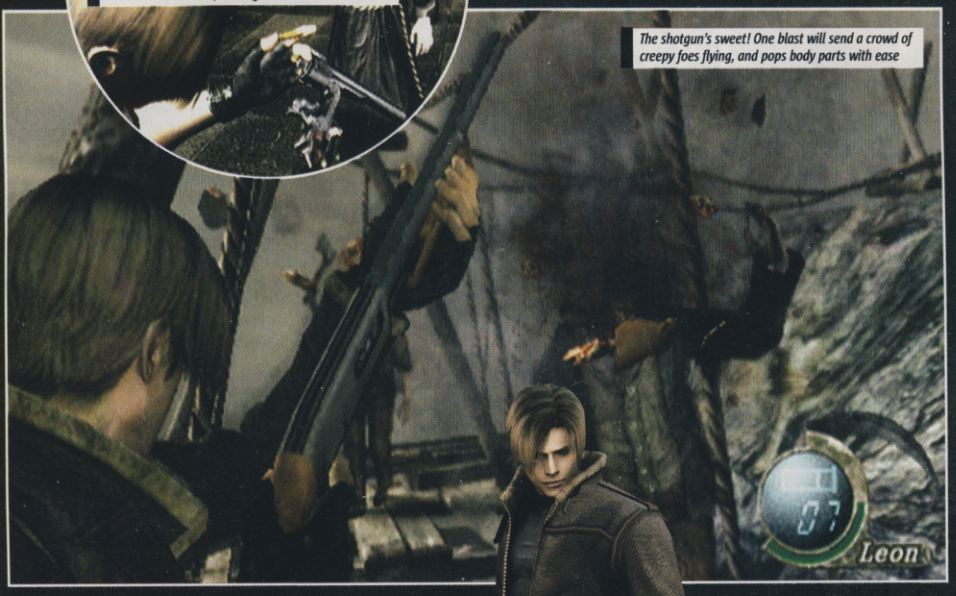
The fighting side has been revamped with some cool ideas and the smattering of mini-games look set to be a novel treat. Cheers for the added value, Midway. **Alex H**

WE LOVE
- The new stages and their tricks
- Mortal mini-games that are actually worth playing

WE HATE
- We'd still like to see new characters that feel different
- Mini-games are low on originality



Back off when you're short on ammo because Leon stands still to reload, making him vulnerable to attack



The shotgun's sweet! One blast will send a crowd of creepy foes flying, and pops body parts with ease

If you're cunning enough, you can lure the crazed villagers into their own vicious booby traps!

* PUBLISHER CAPCOM
* DEVELOPER PRODUCTION STUDIO 4
* OUT: SPRING 2005

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

The dark lord of survival horror has undergone a complete face and personality transplant, so much so you'll hardly recognise it! It promises to offer more than you could ever wish for from a Resi game. And about time.

AVAILABLE ON

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

WWW.CAPCOM.CO.JP/BIO4/INDEX.HTML

UPDATE

RESIDENT EVIL 4

Not to brown-nose Capcom or anything but it's making some shit-hot games at the moment. We played all their upcoming titles at E3, and most of 'em are looking sweet as candy-covered sugar cubes!

But Resi 4 towers above Capcom's entire line-up like a hulking unstoppable tyrant with hellfire burning in its eyes! It's like an all-new game has burst out of Capcom's gurgling womb. So this month we've spent ages wading waist-high in the bloody afterbirth to bring you hard facts on how Cube's number-one nightmare is shaping up.

IT'S A NEW DAWN

Producer Shinji Mikami has chucked most of the old Resi ingredients onto the slagheap and rebuilt the series from scratch. Sure, the hero Leon is a familiar face and you still have to pause the action to access your menu of monster-mashing items, but otherwise Resi 4 is utterly fresh.

You no longer feel like a bumbling twat with cack-handed targeting skills, because the new over-the-shoulder Splinter Cell-style view and control system work so well!

Within an hour of play you're accurately exploding heads and nailing individual body parts at speed. And you need to, 'cos Resi 4 has morphed into a fast-paced horror spectacle that ups your heartbeat to jackhammer speeds and doesn't let up unless you're having your head hacked off with a chainsaw, being pulped by 30-foot ogres or meeting other grizzly ends!

"RESI 4'S AN UNSTOPPABLE TYRANT WITH HELLFIRE BURNING IN ITS EYES!"

But it's not just the blistering pace that raises your blood pressure to a point where you start worrying that your melon might pop. Resi 4 ups the tension with its amazingly interactive environments and kick-ass scenarios. It genuinely feels like any and everything horrible could happen, sending Arctic shivers up your spine.

KNOCK, KNOCK! WHO'S THERE?

A Spanish village level is crawling with murderous locals and you have to make sure that you inventively interact with all your surroundings to survive.

One time we legged it into a shack with a mob of mentalists in hot pursuit. After slamming the door shut we blocked the entrance with a chest. But that didn't stop them for long! We quickly learnt that they soon smash the door to pieces, start clambering over the furniture and demolishing the blockade!

So the only way to keep them at bay was shooting holes in the door and pumping accurate shots into their skulls. Once they started dropping in numbers,

We've seen Tiny here in action and, trust us, he don't play nice. He stamps on anything that moves!

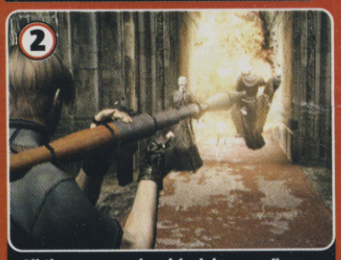
Line 'em up like bowling pins. Aim at the important-looking bod in red, pull the trigger and watch them scatter!

HOLY MOLEY!

You'll be relieved to know Leon's not just packing piddly peashooters and penknives.

He's tooled up with some serious kit, including this meaty rocket-launcher. Here you see the peroxide punisher introducing a gang of holy men to their makers.

The camera zooms close in over Leon's shoulder when you enter the new targeting mode. Perfect for precision shooting!



All the weapons do wicked damage. You can blow someone's head off with a revolver, never mind a rocket-launcher!

We hate tossing off about special effects but the flames and explosions in Resi 4 are ridiculously impressive

"RESI 4 HAS MORPHED INTO A FAST-PACED HORROR SPECTACLE THAT UPS YOUR HEARTBEAT TO JACKHAMMER SPEEDS

GUARDIAN ANGEL

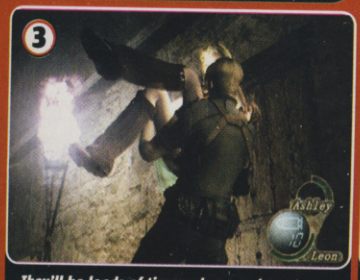
For part of the game Leon has to protect the President's daughter, the rather lovelicious Ashley.

Of course you've got to annihilate anyone or anything that threatens her safety, but you need to do more than just kill stuff to keep her safe. She can't jump down from high areas like Leon can, and she's not nearly as acrobatic. So you'll have to catch her, give her bunk-ups (not that sort), and basically help her get though levels Ico-style.

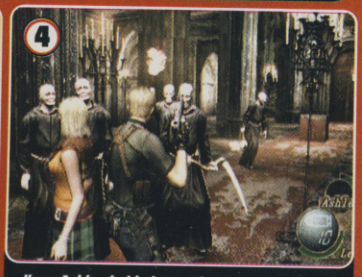
Meet Ashley! Her daddy's the most powerful man on Earth

Ashley's got a health bar just like yours, but we doubt that she can take as much damage

Enemies will try to steal Ashley away. Gun 'em down – without shooting her purty ass

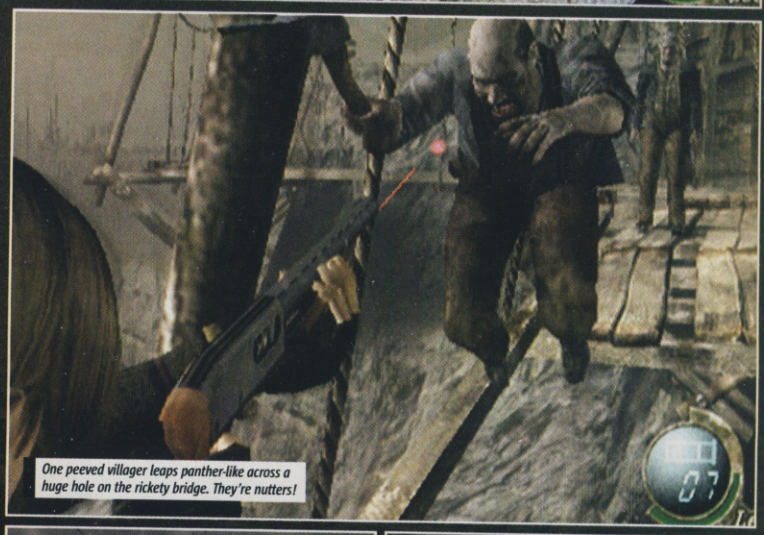


They'll be loads of times when you have to play the gent. Catch the damsel in your arms



Keep Ashley behind you whenever you can. This'll save her from any stray bullets

When you get your sweaty paws on the machine-gun, squeeze and hold down the trigger then get mowing!



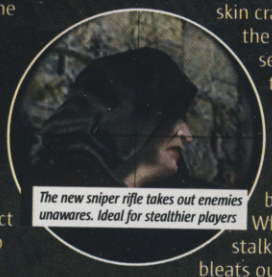
One peeved villager leaps panther-like across a huge hole on the rickety bridge. They're nutters!

we shot a padlock off a door behind, stomped it open, smashed some crates and collected a few flash grenades. Using them blinded and disorientated the psychos for a few seconds, which gave us a small window of time to escape the nightmare situation!

THE FACE OF EVIL

See, thing is, the enemies are properly smart! They're not lumbering morons. They'll do anything to get to you, and work as a gang. You need to think fast and act even faster if you're going to avoid getting mauled by the terrifying hordes of freaky redneck killers.

It doesn't matter that their flesh isn't riddled with rotten puss-filled pockmarks and peeling off like cheese slices. They are terrifying because they're so relentless, resourceful and, well, sorta normal looking – except for the chainsaw-wielding fella with a sack on his head!



The new sniper rifle takes out enemies unawares. Ideal for stealthier players

They scurry up ladders to get to you, smash through windows and smoke you out of hiding places with Molotov cocktails! And it's not just the sight of these crazed villagers that makes your skin crawl. It's the sounds. Take the chainsaw guy – you rarely see him until he's right on top of you, but you can hear the unnerving 'bzz, bzz, bzzzz' of his chainsaw almost wherever you go!

The soundtrack is subtle but disturbing too. Whenever you're being stalked a chilling repetitive tune bleats out, ensuring that you feel uncomfortable even when you can't see your attackers. It just lets you know that they're out there and you shouldn't go getting all smug and complacent!

After a few hours of play it's blindingly obvious Capcom has – finally – answered our prayers and dragged our beloved Resi series kicking and screaming into the 21st century with an new all-action attitude and some devilishly handsome looks. Seems like GameCube owners rarely get gloating opportunities nowadays... well here's one, and it's one hell of a wicked one at that. ✷

If you thought the cave trolls in the Lord Of The Rings were scary, this fella'd eat 'em for breakfast

Hands up who doesn't want to be crushed to death by a giant angry lump of satanic afterbirth?

Leon reacts really convincingly to everything that happens. If an explosion goes off he'll shield himself

The mad monks use all sorts of ancient weapons, including flaming torches and reaper-style scythes

CVG OPINION Capcom's new creation is so hideously brilliant that anyone without a Cube will be cursed with jealous nightmares. If only every sequel were this fresh. **Mike**

WE LOVE
- Cube's best looking game
- Manic speed and intensity
- Awesomely interactive levels

WE HATE
- Controls are miles better but there's still no strafe. Ack!
- Got to wait till 2005!

EXCITE METER: OH BABY!! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / zzz...

* PUBLISHER
MIDWAY
* DEVELOPER
MIDWAY
* OUT:
SEPTEMBER 17

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Forget guns and stealth, your mind is the ultimate weapon. Armed with Psionic powers like a mental David Blaine, Nick Scryer becomes a lethal killing machine up against a sinister terrorist organisation.

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

ALSO ON

XBOX

WWW.MIDWAY.COM

Old shazam Blaine can levitate, but we'd love to see him try this

Opening doors can sometimes be a little risky

Psi-Ops™

THE MINDGATE CONSPIRACY

Sam Fisher and Solid Snake better watch their backs. Nick Scryer is the newest action hero on the block and he should give the stealth assassins a run for their money.

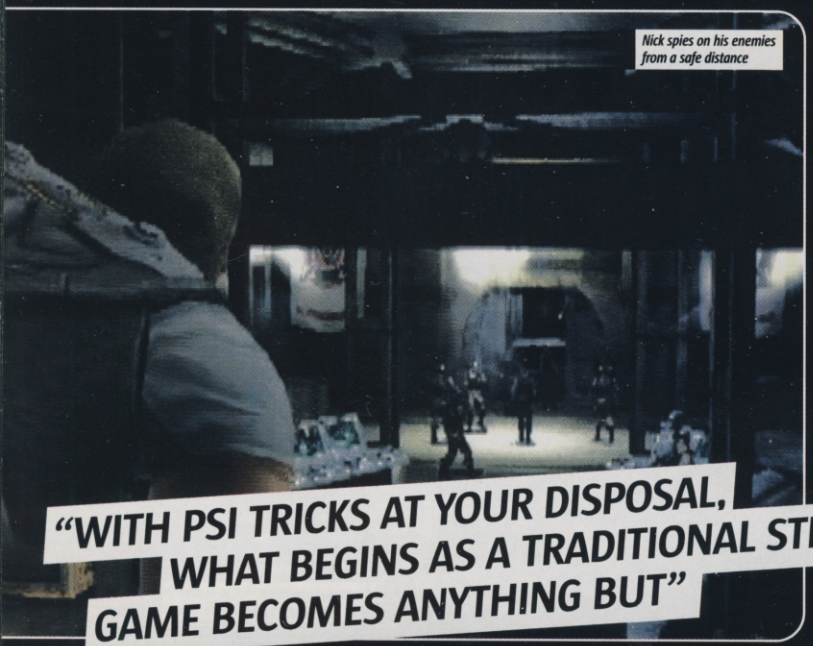
Psi-Ops begins like a conventional stealth-based game. There's a terrorist organisation that needs to be stopped, plus our hero has a familiar crouch to avoid detection and the ability to hug walls to stay out of view.

But in an ingenious twist, things soon start getting very weird. Nick's had his mind wiped so that he can break into this underground organisation undetected. But, pretty soon he starts having flashbacks and his deadly mind skills begin to re-emerge.

LOOK INTO MY MIND

So what are these skills? It seems Nick's been trained in the deadly art of Psi powers – the ability to use the mind as a weapon. Telekinesis grants Nick the power to move objects; pyrokinesis is the ability to launch a wall of fire; mind control allows you to take control of enemies; aura view enables you to see hidden items; remote viewing allows you to go 'out of body' and see through walls and doors without moving. Finally there's Mind Drain, a trick that allows you to restore vital Psi power from your victims.

With these tricks at your disposal, what begins as a traditional stealth game becomes anything but conventional. It's a set of skills that, as soon as you sample them, you'll be wishing that they were available in every game because they're so damn cool to use.



Nick spies on his enemies from a safe distance

"WITH PSI TRICKS AT YOUR DISPOSAL, WHAT BEGINS AS A TRADITIONAL STEALTH GAME BECOMES ANYTHING BUT"

BODY MOVING

Just take a simple situation like trying to get past an armed guard who's patrolling a corridor. Snake would have to wait for the guard to turn his back before sneaking up and giving him a lethal choke hold. In Psi-Ops the situation plays out very differently.

You could use Telekinesis to pick up a nearby crate and throw it at the guard, crushing him to death. Or do the same with an oil drum, but as it nears the guard you shoot it, resulting in a scorching shower of flames. Or pick the guard up and drag him to you, told him in the air and shoot the crap out of him, or simply bounce his broken bones off the walls?

But wait, you could also use Mind Control to slip into the guard's head and then walk him into your gunfire or off a high platform, or make him open fire on his allies, resulting in him being called a traitor and gunned down! Or if you want to preserve your vital Psi energy, you can sneak up on the guard and use Mind Drain, sucking the Psi energy from the victim. The beauty of this technique, if you remain undetected, is that you can suck on your victim's Psi until their brain goes POP!

The beauty of Psi-Ops is that a guard patrolling a corridor is the simplest situation you'll face. How do you use your skills in a room full of soldiers or defeat bosses with the same Psi powers as yourself? The set of toys at your disposal is so expressive and versatile it means that no two players will do it in the same way – a sure-fire sign of a great game. More on this one soon. By reading your minds, we know you're excited! *

MOUNTAIN MOVER

Not only is Telekinesis a cool power to have, but the control method is so ridiculously simple that it adds to the fun. A target reticule is on screen at all times.

Move it over an object and you can lock-onto it. The shoulder buttons allow you to levitate an object and the right analog stick moves the object. Plus if you flick the stick quickly you can throw the object.

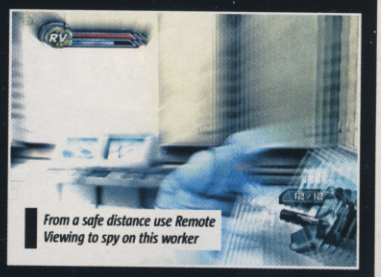
The first of your Psi powers is restored. Now the fun really begins...

In the training centre, you've got to squash the running man with that crate

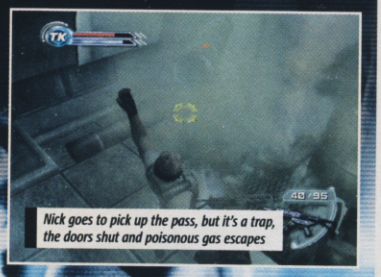
Once you've got the power to lift objects, things start getting nasty

You'll get so good with your new skills that you're soon hoping for more guards to play with

A remote sentry gun gets taken out with a well-timed throw of an oil drum



From a safe distance use Remote Viewing to spy on this worker



Nick goes to pick up the pass, but it's a trap, the doors shut and poisonous gas escapes

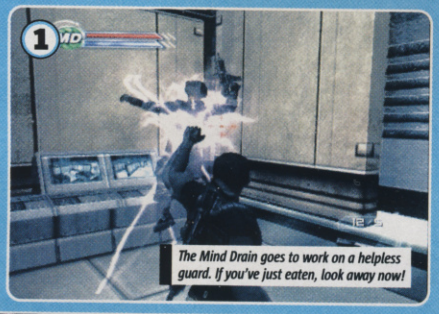
The glass may be bullet-proof – luckily you have Psi powers to escape

Enjoying a little gunplay with your female friend

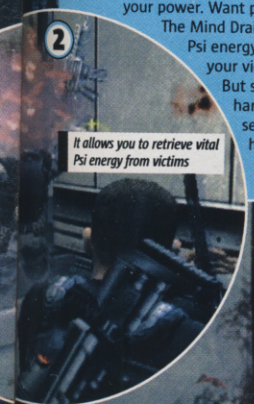
SUCK 'EM AND SEE

Your range of powers in Psi-Ops is so impressive that it feels like you're starring in the pages of your own comic book.

There's also a lot of joy to be had by being completely evil with your power. Want proof? The Mind Drain sucks Psi energy from your victims. But suck too hard and see what happens!



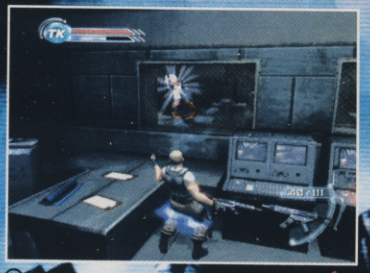
The Mind Drain goes to work on a helpless guard. If you've just eaten, look away now!



It allows you to retrieve vital Psi energy from victims

But keep sucking for too long and eventually their brain explodes!

Yours powers turn drums into big hand grenades

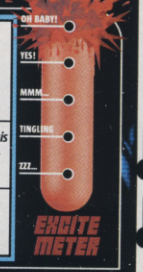


You can even mess with the guards when you're in another room!

CVG OPINION If you think it sounds cool, just wait until you play it. Telekinesis alone gave us some of our fave gaming moments of the year so far. This deserves to be BIG. **Alex H**

WE LOVE
- Causing devastation with Telekinesis
- Great physics engine, rag doll style
- Exploding heads!

WE HATE
- Waiting for the camera to catch up



THE RED STAR ★

- PUBLISHER ACCLAIM
- DEVELOPER ACCLAIM AUSTIN
- OUT: AUTUMN

PS2 XBOX

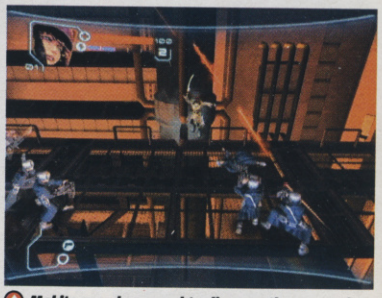
WWW.ACCLAIM.COM

Based on the award-winning comic book, The Red Star is a futuristic shooter with a rather retro feel. The action is set in an alternate Russia, where massive technology and weapons are wielded by its army, The Red Fleet. Three heroes – each equipped with a unique set of skills – team up to take-down this tyrannical regime.

These include Kyuzo, a slow bodyguard with big weapons, and Makita, who is smaller and quicker but doesn't boast an offensive special attack – you get the picture. What provides the retro feel is the way it plays. It looks like a side-scrolling beat 'em up of old, with armed guards swinging swords as they swarm you. In a cool twist, it also plays like a shooter along the lines of R-Type or Gradius but with smart enemy AI routines and regular, bullet-spitting boss battles. An interesting idea for sure, but will it find an audience? ✷

These guards are slow but their shields make them difficult to attack. Shields down please Scotty

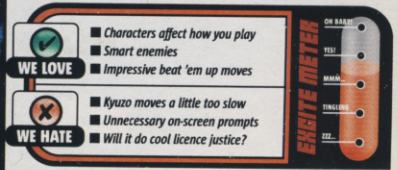
A scrolling shooter with more bullet-dodging than R-Type!? Okay, we'll have some of that!



Makita uses her speed to disperse the posse of guards. Must've been the beans and sprouts supper

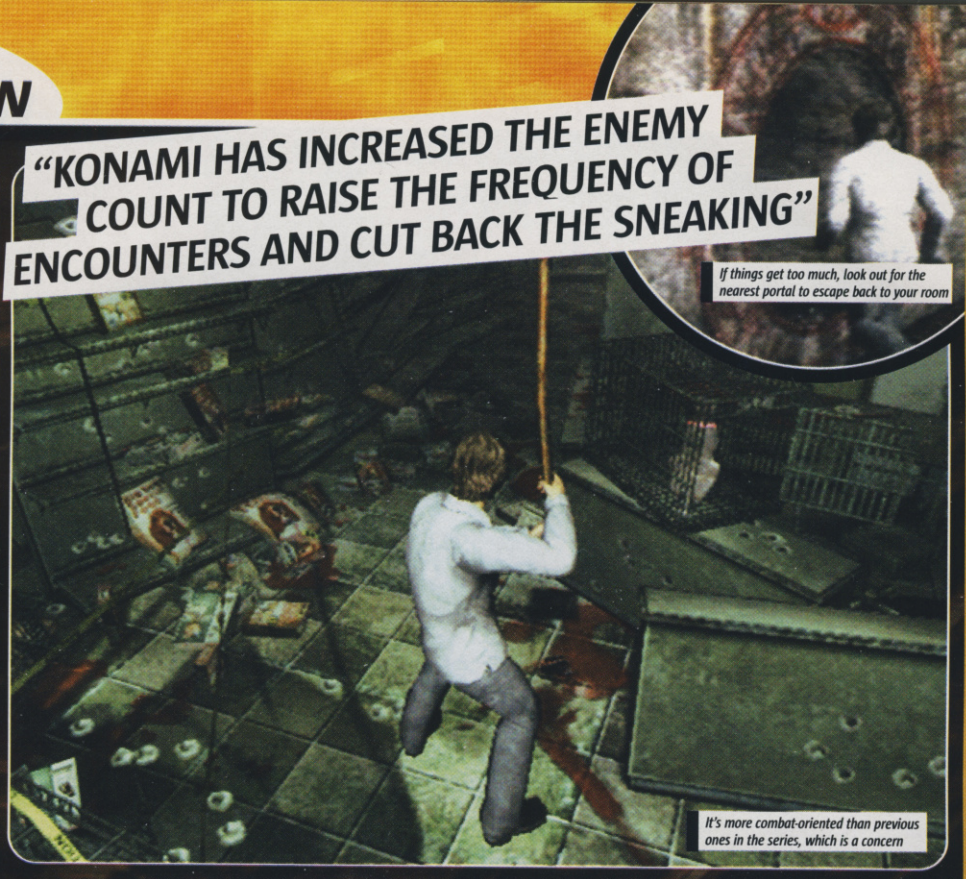
WE LOVE
- Characters affect how you play
- Smart enemies
- Impressive beat 'em up moves

WE HATE
- Kyuzo moves a little too slow
- Unnecessary on-screen prompts
- Will it do cool licence justice?



SILENT HILL 4 THE ROOM

"KONAMI HAS INCREASED THE ENEMY COUNT TO RAISE THE FREQUENCY OF ENCOUNTERS AND CUT BACK THE SNEAKING"



If things get too much, look out for the nearest portal to escape back to your room

It's more combat-oriented than previous ones in the series, which is a concern

- PUBLISHER: KONAMI
- DEVELOPER: KONAMI
- OUT: SEPTEMBER

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Less sneaking around with the ol' torch, more spiking with the ol' pickaxe this time. The code we played was pretty limited so no plot revelations, except that you've all-new heroes and ghouls to meet and beat.

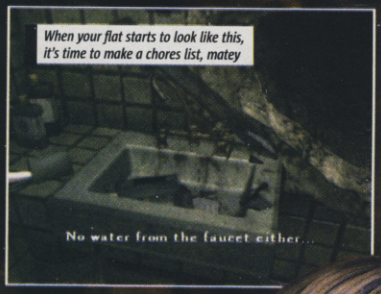
AVAILABLE ON

PS2

ALSO ON

XBOX, PC

WWW.KONAMI.COM



When your flat starts to look like this, it's time to make a chores list, matey

No water from the faucet either...

DUN RUNNING

With 'The Room' Konami has increased the enemy count to raise the frequency of encounters, and cut back the sneaking aspect. This will prove pretty major for fans of the series, we expect. Also huge is that new hero, Henry Townsend, invades the enemy's world, as opposed to them invading ours.

Consequently we're handed more supernatural tools to end the nightmares that plagued the likes of James (Silent Hill 2), or Heather (Silent Hill 3), including some that old Van Helsing would die for! It's a change in formula that may seem worrying in theory, but actually makes a lot more sense in practice. So don't start losing sleep... just yet.

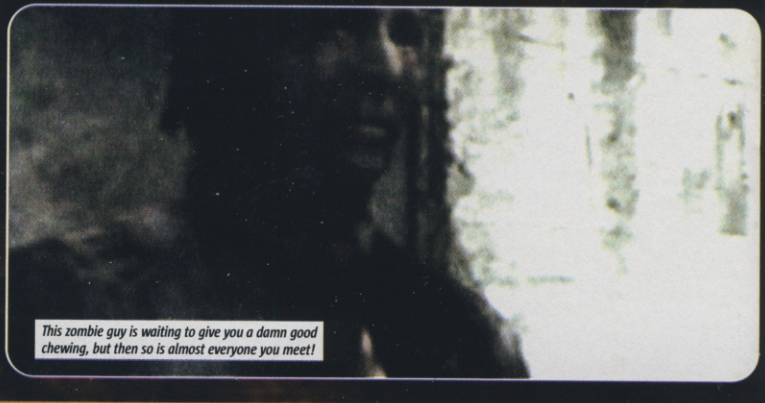
'SCUSE THE BLOOD

As is tradition in the Silent Hill series, newcomer Henry Townsend is unrelated to any previous victims. Even though Townsend shacked up in Ashfield, a town just outside of Silent Hill, he doesn't get away so easily.

Henry winds up locked inside his apartment; the door heavily chained and padlocked on the inside, even the windows are jammed solid. He can peer out the

If you've ever had a full-on blood-oozing nightmare, you'll know survival is all that counts. There's nothing heroic about it, because that would feel too good.

In a real nightmare you're just the victim – your legs won't run fast enough, your arms aren't strong enough, the light switches don't work – in fact the whole fekkin' world is absolutely against you and it isn't playing fair. The Silent Hill series is all about such nightmares.

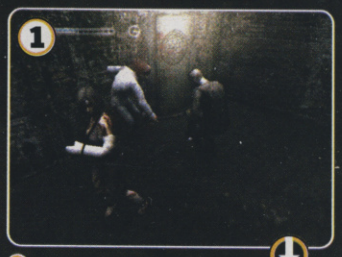


This zombie guy is waiting to give you a damn good chewing, but then so is almost everyone you meet!

COME ON EILEEN

It's clear Henry's neighbour Eileen has been in a few scrapes. With who or what is a mystery, but all you need worry about is keeping her safe from now on.

Eileen has strength enough to keep smaller enemies at bay with her handbag-o-justice, but bigger threats will leave her looking like something in a butcher's shop window.



While Henry batters a ghost with an axe, Eileen scarpers to safety

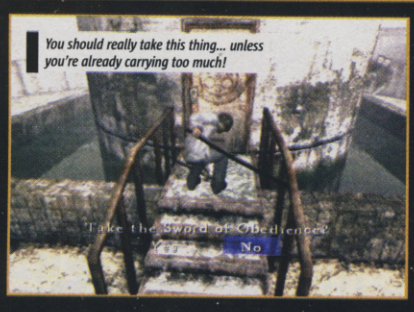
Eileen can handle small enemies such as birds (or whatever they are!)

Just don't let her get too beat up, as she's often useful for solving puzzles

KILL WHAT'S ALREADY DEAD

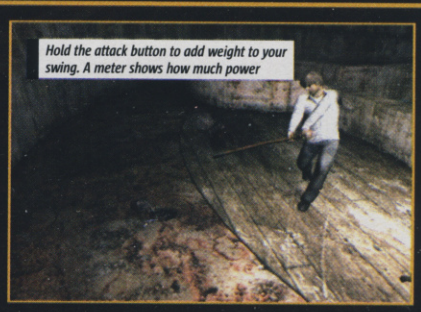
Like we said, more weapons are suited to destroying the demon-sorts in Silent Hill 4. We especially like the Pickaxe of Despair, and not just because of the silly name.

It wallops ghosts to the floor, whereupon you can whip out the Sword of Obedience to nail them in place so they won't come back to haunt you.



You should really take this thing... unless you're already carrying too much!

Yes! Ghosts are no longer a problem, provided you spot them first and don't miss



Hold the attack button to add weight to your swing. A meter shows how much power

SILENT BUT DEADLY

Enemies in SH4 are fighting on their own turf, so are much tougher and more plentiful than before.

Battling against them can prove arduous at the very least, with hellhounds gnawing on your legs. But worst of all are ghosts that can sap your stamina by simply floating nearby, and if they get too close they'll drain your blood.

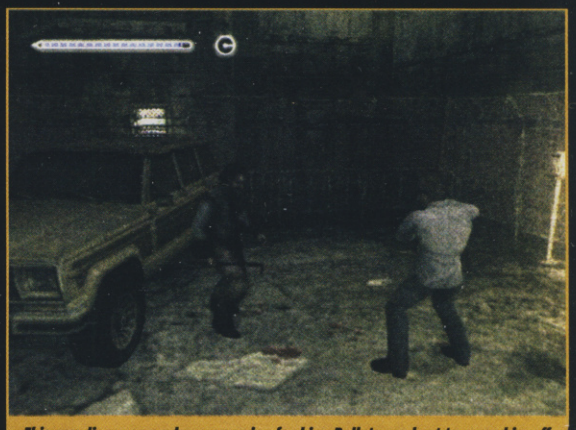
Demonic dogs with horrible long tongues love human flesh

Bird-like things fly at your head to spear you with their 'beaks' and suck blood

REALLY don't like these things very much! They'll swat you with their long arms

These wheelchairs are POSSESSED BY THE DEVIL! When they bite it hurts, dude

We think they used to be patients at the hospital. NHS, presumably



This guy disappears when you swing for him. Bullets are best to scare him off

It's pretty cool when you die – the screen resembles a scratchy old film reel

window to scope the buildings and streets. Life looks normal (apart from a pink rabbit air balloon). He can even peer through a hole in the wall to the flat next door, apparently belonging to sidekick Eileen (though we never see her naked – bah).

EXTREME PEST CONTROL

In fact, we never saw her at all. The TV is shot, likewise the radio – trademark Silent Hill fuzz in full effect. There's a phone, but no one picks up even if you have a useful number. Well, something picks up, but it just laughs and disappears in more static.

Henry's only way out is a suspicious hole in the wall, one that you'd have to be crazy or plain desperate to risk. Which, of course, he is.

It gets a whole lot worse on the dark side of Henry's wall. A series of holes lead into alternate universes, all linked to Silent Hill. The three level demo we played reveals uber-natural Silent Hill to be more foreboding than it ever was in real life, not least because there are more monsters.

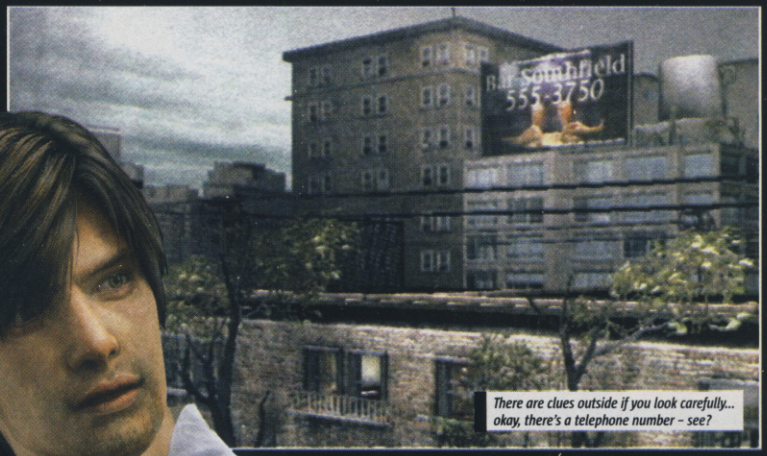
To help combat them SH4 adopts a real-time inventory menu, allowing Henry to toggle between weapons and other useful items without quitting from the main action to a separate menu.

It also seems that most of the quest is carried out alongside worse-for-wear partner Eileen. We're guessing that her apartment has freaked too, so she and Henry are battling through this mystery together. Anyway, Eileen appears to take on damage if Henry doesn't protect her. Also, at least in the demo, Eileen is unable to protect herself except by flailing her handbag here and there – kind of comical really and not a little bit annoying.

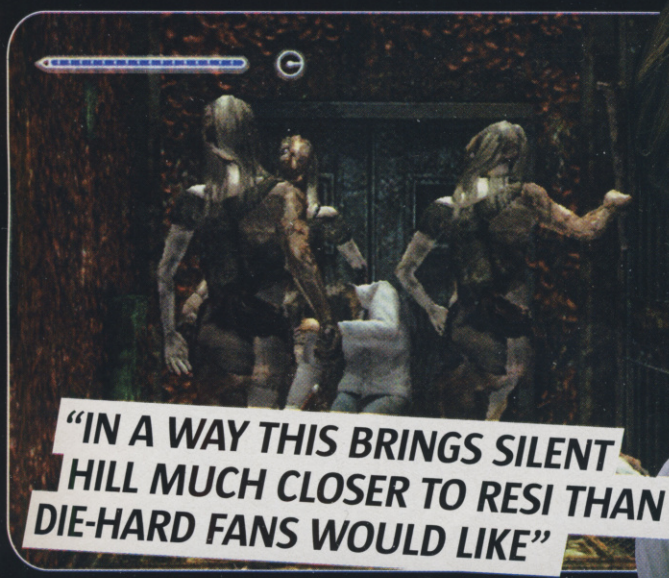
SETTING THE PACE

Konami tells us that SH4 is more up-tempo than before in order to appeal to a wider audience. Although many of us enjoyed the alone-in-the-dark tension of previous episodes, many more found that too many locked doors and gloomy dead ends was frustrating. In a way this brings SH much closer to Resident Evil than die-hard fans would like.

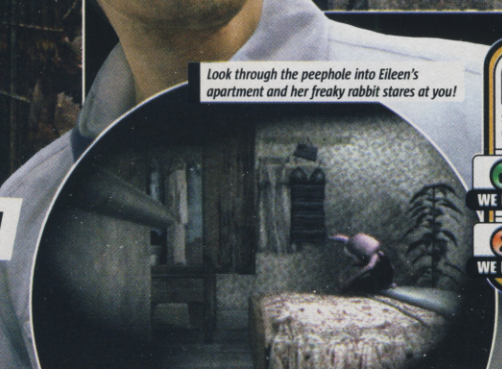
However we're optimistic that, although some of the claustrophobia has gone, the creepiness will be back in force, especially with such a vile cast of new enemies that won't let you escape easily.



There are clues outside if you look carefully... okay, there's a telephone number – see?



"IN A WAY THIS BRINGS SILENT HILL MUCH CLOSER TO RESI THAN DIE-HARD FANS WOULD LIKE"

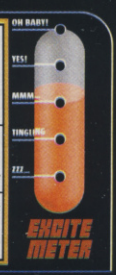


Look through the peephole into Eileen's apartment and her freaky rabbit stares at you!

CVG OPINION The extra action content keeps you on edge, which is good. There's less suspense so it isn't so tormenting, just stressful. Overall, the new balance works. **Paul**

WE LOVE
- Kept on our toes by more enemies
- Puzzles are less obscure
- Protecting Eileen adds responsibility

WE HATE
- Could lose some of its Silent Hill-ness
- Can't carry as many items as before
- Going back for slowcoach Eileen



- PUBLISHER: SEGA
- DEVELOPER: AMUZE
- OUT: AUTUMN
- ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Sci-fi sequel to Sega's stealth-filled conspiracy thriller. Set 20 years on from the original, hero Jack Wade takes a back seat to the action to let new girl Leeza sort out the twisted plot – using as many cartwheels as she can fit in.

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

WWW.SEGA-EUROPE.COM

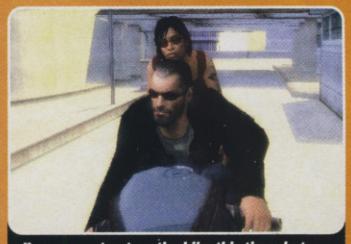
UPDATE

HEADHUNTER: REDEMPTION

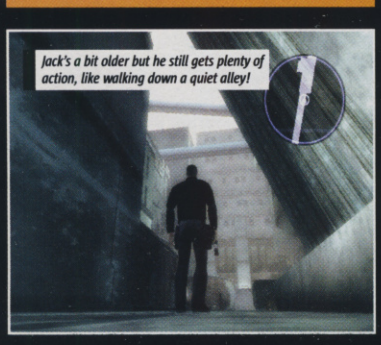
BIKE THEFT

A unique element of the original Headhunter was the way Jack would hop on a bike to travel around the town to reach new areas.

It was a decent idea that broke up the action but added unnecessary hours to the game's running time. For the sequel, the bike racing is gone. In its place are more cinematic cutscenes. Some will dislike the change, but it does keep the action moving along at a better pace.



You may not get on the bike this time, but the characters still enjoy a go in cutscenes



Jack's a bit older but he still gets plenty of action, like walking down a quiet alley!

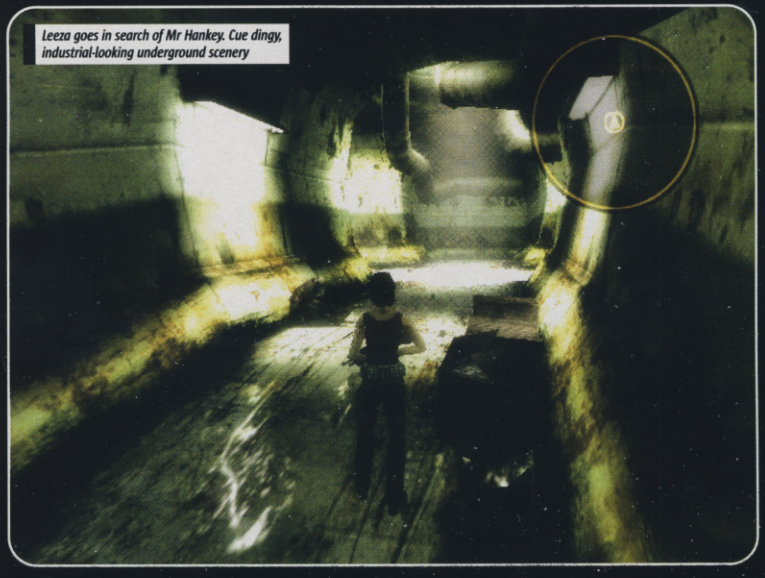
Anyone out there remember Headhunter? Back in Sega's darkest days when the Dreamcast was taking a beating despite a great line-up of titles, Headhunter was being touted as a rival to Metal Gear. How do you think that one worked out?

The answer is it didn't, but that doesn't mean it was a bad game. Not in the slightest, it just failed to find a big audience, but that's where the sequel could find some degree of redemption. And, as luck would have it, Redemption is also the subtitle of the sequel. What a beautiful little segue.

THE BEARD IS BACK

The hero of the first game Jack Wade is back, with his dodgy beard, gruff voice and a way with one-liners that would make Schwarzenegger and Clint Eastwood blush. Once again, he's faced with the task of keeping law and order, but that's going to be more difficult in the sequel as 20 years later, the city that Jack protects has changed quite a bit.

The world has evolved into the ultimate consumer society, split literally down the middle into two classes, Above and Below. Above is a glittering metropolis of glass and steel towers where the citizens are controlled by the media and the corporations behind them. Below is, like



Leeza goes in search of Mr Hankey. Cue dingy, industrial-looking underground scenery

THE RED PILL

One thing we couldn't shake from our heads while playing Headhunter: Redemption is how similar it feels to last year's Enter The Matrix.

The futuristic setting and third-person viewpoint makes it look similar, but the most shocking similarity is the way Leeza X looks and her acrobatic movement through the levels. She's like Trinity in a red vest!

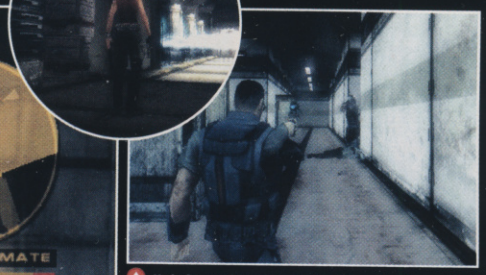
Leeza shows off some close-quarter fight moves – either that or she's letting one rip

Leeza's armed with some graceful acrobatic moves – you should see her cartwheels!

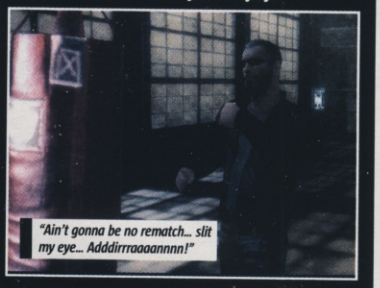
Stealth action with tits! Could this be any better?

It's Trinity! No it's Leeza! Same difference

Someone's about to get turned into a sprinkler



He's been shopping again, down the Army Surplus Store with Gordon from Half-Life

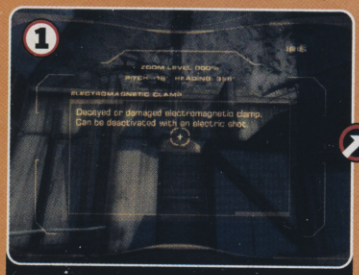


In the future, heavy industry always turns a funny rusty brown colour and it's often very dark out

Cleaner's been on the skive again... Wonder if you can hook up an Eye Toy and wash those windows?

THE SCIENCE BIT

Did you know that in the future, modern things like maps and binoculars will be replaced with maps and binoculars that have fancy graphic overlays? In the future, everything will be futuristic!



Simply by moving the scanner over an object you can learn more about it. Interesting...

Navigating on a flat map can be tough. In 3D it's still tricky but is a lot snazzier to look at

the name implies, the home to criminals, undesirables and misfits.

LEEZA WITH AN X

While Jack may be back, he's not alone and with the beard a little greyer, it's time for some new blood to accompany him in stalking the criminal masterminds of the shadowy underworld. Step forward Leeza X, a tough and sassy street kid. She also happens to be a bit of a looker who knows how to handle herself.

FUTURE PERFECT

Each character has unique abilities, weapons and style and as luck would have it, you'll be using both of them as the plot thickens, twists and turns. If you played the original, you'll have some idea what you're in for; high production values, strong plotting and plenty of action. The game is a successful mix of exploration, stealth and gunplay – with boss battles on a grand scale.

The futuristic setting not only gives the game a cool aesthetic full of Tron-style neon lights and metallic corridors, but also affords the game with some cool gadgets and weaponry that will have Solid Snake salivating. And with a full orchestral score, this looks set to sound as good as it looks. ✷

CVG OPINION With high production values and solid action, Headhunter is shaping up to be the hit that the original wasn't. Still don't like that beard, though. **Alex H**

WE LOVE
- The close-quarter combat – sometimes better than a gunfight!
- A satisfyingly solid futuristic vision

WE HATE
- Sections that lock you into an area until you've found an item
- Controls are far too fussy and fiddly

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...

SEGA SUPERSTARS

✷ PUBLISHER SEGA
✷ DEVELOPER SONIC TEAM
✷ OUT: AUTUMN

PC CD ROM

x4

WWW.SEGA-EUROPE.COM

Eye Toy: Play was great fun. It seems a lot of developers thought so too. There's a rash of titles being designed for the PlayStation 2's camera peripheral, but one of the most intriguing looks to be Sega Superstars – a collection of mini-games from the legendary Sonic Team.

We've already played the mini-games based around House Of The Dead (slap the zombies, don't hit the pretty women) and Sonic (collect rings and emeralds), but more exciting is that Sonic Team is delving into both its own and Sega's back catalogue of hits for further mini- games for the title. Samba De Amigo, Virtua Fighter, ChuChu Rocket!, Billy Hatcher, Monkey Ball, Space Channel 5, Puyo Pop, Crazy Taxi and the legendary NiGHTS are all set to appear in Sega Superstars. Bring 'em on!

These zombies are pussies – they don't even need bullets to be taken down. Just give 'em a big slap!

That's not sporting! Kick him, but don't fire egg bombs! Where d'you learn your manners?

"She'll twist and turn you out, livin' la vida loca..." Make like Enrique with extra-large hair gel

WE LOVE
- The potential of interacting with classic Sega titles in unique ways
- Punch Akira in the nuts!

WE HATE
- The Sonic game is dull – all you do is collect rings in a long tunnel
- Makes us look rough on screen!

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...

All tanks should be big and blue. That way war would be so much more fun...

Check the dusty apocalyptic cities – Tribes has definitely had a makeover

It may not be the most streamlined of flying machines, but it sure can blow a lot of shit up...

Work is well underway for the new Wembley Stadium, though a few sticklers reckon the redesign's gone a bit too far

TRIBES VENGEANCE

- PUBLISHER: VU GAMES
- DEVELOPER: IRRATIONAL
- OUT: OCTOBER

ONLINE GAMING | x32

IN A NUTSHELL

Online fanboy mega-shooter gets a makeover that's geared to get the masses strapped into jetpacks and firing spinning blades at each other. Multiplayer mayhem is about to be given a whole new dimension.

AVAILABLE ON

PC CD ROM

WWW.TRIBESVENGEANCE.COM

There are a lot of wars online, but there's one in particular that the people in the 'biz' want to you to enlist for: Tribal War – a raging battle between various groups of heavily armoured rocketeers that, until now, has kept a pretty cult status among the big names in shooters.

We say until now, because Irrational, a bunch of guys from down under, have been charged with making Tribes into a game that'll steal more net bandwidth than Paris Hilton and Pamela Anderson combined – and from what CVG has seen in some early code they're well on their way to succeeding, in both multiplayer and single-player blasting.

Back up, put the gun down and give me a packet of Tropical Fruit Bubblicious! And some Skittles!

ROCKET MAN

It's big, bold and colourful – but within the rolling green hills, towering bases, ruined cities and vast sporting arenas of the Tribes world there's a system of movement so smooth it feels like you're surfing on a lake of Yakult yoghurt drink – you fire your jetpack, you soar through the sky, you land, you skid, you ski, you fly up again. It's like sex without the mucky stuff, and it may be easy to pick up but it's a bitch to master.

It feels a bit like Unreal Tournament, and purists might get a little miffed at their favourite rocket-muncher getting streamlined, but with a crazy time-skipping, generation-jumping storyline that'll teach you the tricks and the tactics for your online shootery, we reckon these guys are onto a winner.

With some heavy firepower, a bunch of character classes and one character that you get to play who's an ass-kicking Princess who's become the David Beckham of the Tribes sporting world, Tribes: Vengeance may well be the game we'll be running to when Doom 3 gets just that little bit too scary. ✷

This gun is the fabled Tribes Disc Launcher. It's a pretty nifty bit of kit and fires lumps of explosive metal at the evil enemy

You'll get to man the guns on this beauty, knocking rocketeers out of the sky with your big death machine

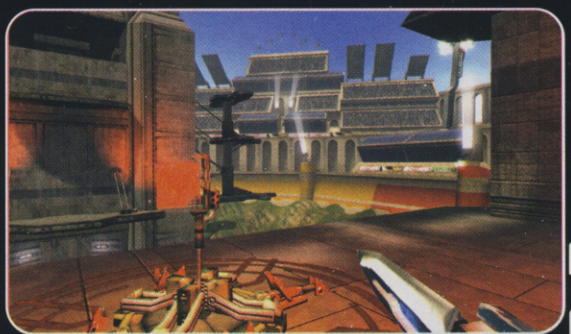
CVG's own Pete was once a Tribal King and ruled the internet with an iron rocket pack. True story

GET TO GRIPS WITH GRAPPLING

If you're jetting around the place and realise that you've hurled yourself towards some angry-looking, mini-gun brandishing Tribal wide-boys, then simply take your grappling hook, aim and fire at the nearest handy ledge.

Watch yourself swing around like you're on a mid-air hairpin and leave your pursuers far behind. Me Tarzan!

This man's holding a Grappler. Fear him and his rope-hurling capabilities



This is a flag – study it carefully. Online, you must pick up this flag and take it to the nearest flag depository. Flags mean prizes

CVG OPINION

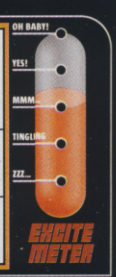
Shaping up to be a different kind of multiplayer experience with all the wicked flying about. With a well-structured solo campaign, this could be a real hit. **Will**

WE LOVE

- Tarting about in the air
- Big weapons and the grappling hook
- The care lavished upon single-player

WE HATE

- Tribes always was pretty hardcore
- Less hardcore stuff = angry nerds
- Graphics brash but not flash



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TEXT YOUR ANSWERS TO: 83125
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How to enter: first type 'CVG SPIDEY' and then the letter matching your answer. Eg: 'CVG SPIDEY B'*

*TEXTS COST 50P PLUS STANDARD OPERATING CHARGE

£15,000 CVG PRIZE!

SCOOP SCORCHING SPIDER-MAN 2 PRIZES!

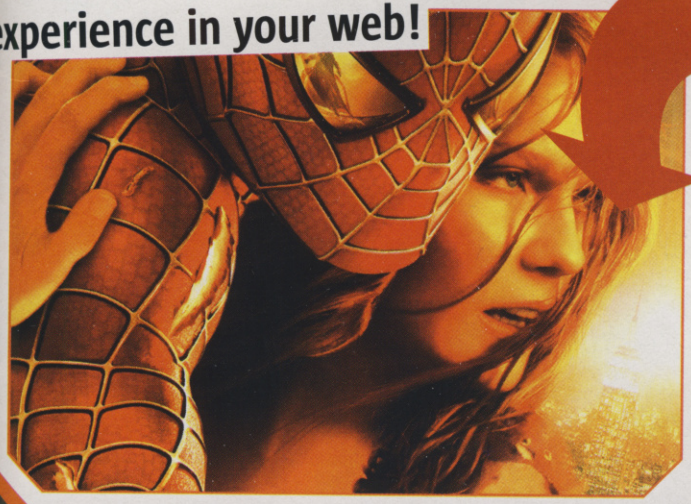
Is your Spidey Sense tingling? It bloomin' well should be, because we've managed to catch the biggest, coolest, most truly amazing Spider-Man 2 competition EVER by swinging by our friends at SonyCard.

The blockbustin', web-slingin' sequel opens on July 15. Having kicked the Green Goblin's ass in the last movie, Spidey's gonna have to deal with crazy-arms himself, Dr. Octopus! And you'll be able to don the red and blue romper suit yourself with the Spider-Man 2 game – out in July on just about every videogame format known to mankind.

But before you do that, YOU HAVE TO ENTER THIS COMPETITION! Why? Well, it's worth £20,000 for starters. Just check this lot out: if you win you get to go to LA. You get to pimp it up in a limo. You get to stay in a swank hotel. You get to go act like a VIP on an exclusive tour of the Sony Pictures Studio. And you get to go to a special screening of Spider-Man 2! And you get to take THREE mates too!

This, in case you haven't noticed, is an absolutely AMAZING prize. Aim your web blasters at the coupon, send it scuttling off to us, and you could be jetting off on the ultimate Spider-Man 2 holiday! *

Catch the ultimate Spider-Man 2 experience in your web!



WIN ALL THIS!

One ridiculously lucky winner gets:

- * Return airline tickets for four people to Los Angeles from London Heathrow.
- * Six nights accommodation at the Sheraton Hotel & Resort in Los Angeles
- * Return transfer by limousine from Los Angeles Airport to the hotel
- * Six days rental of a luxury car
- * VIP escorted tour of the Sony Pictures Studio in Los Angeles
- * A special screening of Spider-Man 2

SonyCard reserves the right to substitute the prize trip for an alternative of equal value. No alternative will be offered for any part or all of the prize. Full UK or Eire passports required. Under 18s must go with an adult. Car rental needs full UK driving licence. Trip must be completed by 11/12/04. Insurance not included.

All you need to do to win this amazing prize is answer the following question:

What legendary bad guy does Spidey face off against in the Spider-Man 2 movie and game?

A. Dr Octopus
B. Dr October
C. Dr Harold Shipman

* Spider-Man and all related characters: ™ & © 2004 Marvel Characters, Inc. Spider-Man 2, the movie: © 2004 Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc. All rights reserved.

YOU'VE GOT TO BE IN IT TO WIN IT
Tick one of the following boxes
A.☐ B.☐ C.☐

*TITLE: .....
*FORENAME: .....
*SURNAME: .....
*ADDRESS: .....
.....
*POSTCODE: .....
*DAYTIME TELEPHONE NO: .....
*EMAIL: .....

Send you entries to: Computer And Video Games, CCVG408A, Dennis Publishing, PO Box 154, Bradford, BD1 5RZ

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XBOX

RELEASE DATE
13 AUG

GAME INFO
COST: £39.99
PLAYERS: 1

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: VIVENDI
- DEV: TIGON
- WWW.RIDDICKGAME.COM
- ONLINE: NO

Whenever Riddick is climbing about the place, the viewpoint changes to third-person

There aren't many 'flick the switch-open the door' puzzles in this game, thank gawd

Can't say there's a happy atmosphere in prison, but at least there is an atmosphere

No, Riddick didn't do this. But it shows what he's let himself in for at Butcher Bay

COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES CVG SPECIAL PLAYTEST FEATURE

Vin Diesel takes a shine to Xbox. And trust us, you will too when you see Riddick

CHRONICLES RIDDICK™

ESCAPE FROM BUTCHER BAY

Who the hell calls himself Vin Diesel and gets away with it? Imagine anyone here trying that, it would be open season for dead arms.

Thing about Vin Diesel is that his arms could toss the moon like it was a ping-pong ball, and Vin's subterranean voice makes the whole room shake even when he talks nice. We guess Vin could name himself Von Flowerpot for all anyone really cares, because no-one's gonna argue.

In any case, we get the idea Vin Diesel is nobody's fool, and anyhow has a handful of kick-arse movies to his credit even if you still want to say he's stupid. Pitch Black, xXx, and Fast And The Furious are very different movies, but with one central theme that keeps them tight – Vin as the anti-hero. His new film Chronicles Of Riddick, opens in the UK on 20 August (a week after the game), and it's already scored some good reviews Stateside. It's the prequel to Pitch Black, detailing the history of convict Richard B. Riddick prior to his being captive onboard the Hunter-Gratzner passenger-freighter.

One of the crafty inmates sets fire to some poison gloop, which explodes a canister!

DIESEL DOES GAMES SHOCKER

But what's really tweaking our curiosity is that Vin recently started his own videogames studio, Tigon Games. Its first game will be – wait for it – Chronicles Of Riddick: Escape From Butcher Bay, and Vin has been heavily involved from the start.

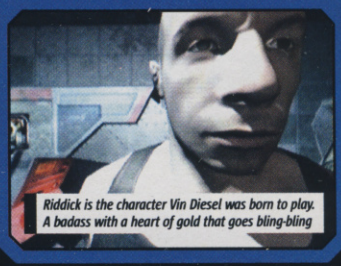
The title's a wee give-away: the game is all about getting Riddick out of Butcher Bay, which is the name of the high security 'correction facility' that Riddick is banged up in, and surviving a little of what lies beyond. Whereas the plot of the COR movie takes place years after the events in Pitch Black, the game is what happened before. Crucially, this also includes how Riddick came to receive his legendary Eye Shine – the ability to see in the dark, and the need to wear designer shades.

If we do a little tracking back of our own, we're back in May, at E3 in LA – the world's biggest videogame trade show where the hottest new titles are shown for the first time. As far as first-person action-

RICHARD B RIDDICK

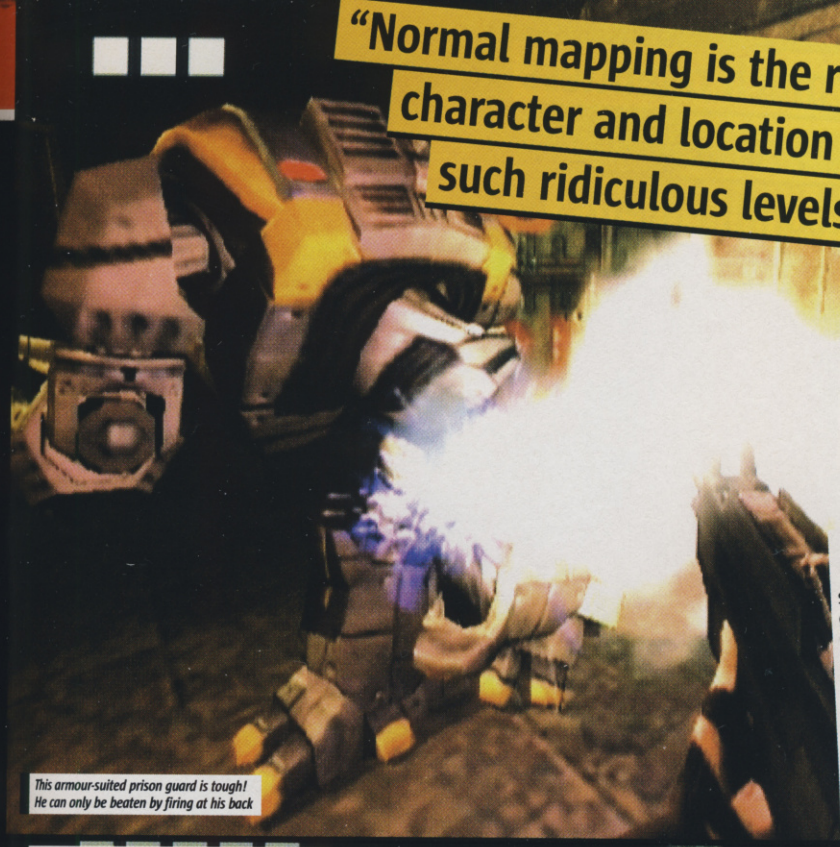
Vin Diesel has described the character he plays as, "A futuristic Conan, coupled with a Harrison Ford attitude."

He is a child of destiny, akin to Luke Skywalker in Star Wars or Neo in The Matrix, conceptualised by Director David Twohy for the tough-guy role in Pitch Black. Twohy and Diesel have co-written Riddick's part in the sequel to make him more formidable.



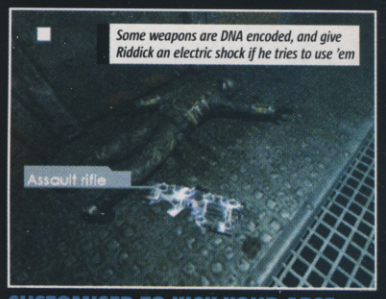
Riddick is the character Vin Diesel was born to play. A badass with a heart of gold that goes bling-bling

"Normal mapping is the reason every character and location contain such ridiculous levels of detail"



This armour-suited prison guard is tough! He can only be beaten by firing at his back

Okay, okay, so there's some crate-related action too. One day, there'll be a law banning crates in videogames



Some weapons are DNA encoded, and give Riddick an electric shock if he tries to use 'em

CUSTOMISED TO KICK YOUR ARSE

Whether the movie Chronicles Of Riddick is a hit or not (and we suspect it will be), the associated videogame will succeed because it has a class all its own. The fact that Vin Diesel's videogame persona is uncannily close to that of his movie (and we mean this in a good way Mr Diesel, dude... sir) is a bonus.

Since this is the first game Tigon has put out, we've nothing to judge them by, but what a way to debut! Instead of buying in somebody else's game engine and fashioning some clumsy exploits around it, Tigon has created its own graphics, physics and gameplay tools. Combined, they enable Butcher Bay to stand apart from the crowd with a distinctive visual style, and some gameplay hooks that we're loving to bits on CVG.

IN A NORMAL KIND OF WAY

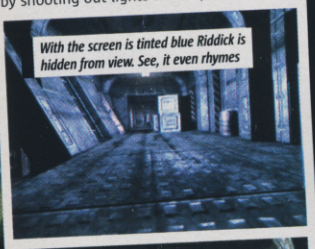
Without getting too technical, the reason everything looks so solid and real is down to a rendering technology called Normal Mapping. Dull name, sweet results. Normal Mapping allows Xbox to go beyond graphical expectations by cleverly depicting scenes using 3D models reconstructed as 2D textures. It sounds boring, but the results really jump out at you from the screen.

We're mentioning Normal Mapping because it's smart, and it's the reason every character you meet in the game and every location you meet them in contain such ridiculous levels of detail. It's why Riddick looks every bit the muscle-bound menace he's intended to be, and the world he inhabits oozes its hard-edged atmosphere. You could »

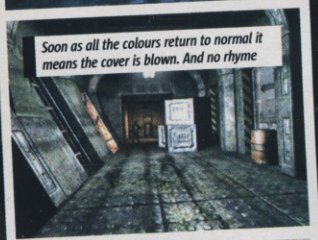
COOL CAT'S EYES

Snooping around on his haunches usually guarantees Riddick safety in the shadows, depicted by blue-tinted vision.

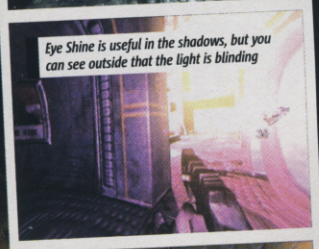
However he can be spotted even while crouching, in which case his vision returns to normal. Eye Shine can be used at any time, but Riddick will be blinded if things are too bright, so make things comfortable by shooting out lights where possible.



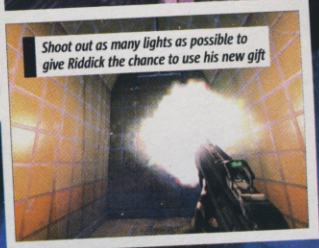
With the screen is tinted blue Riddick is hidden from view. See, it even rhymes



Soon as all the colours return to normal it means the cover is blown. And no rhyme



Eye Shine is useful in the shadows, but you can see outside that the light is blinding



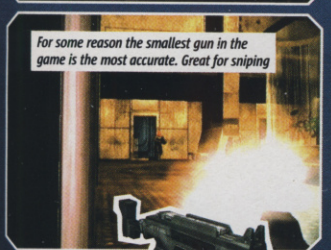
Shoot out as many lights as possible to give Riddick the chance to use his new gift

STITCHES AND BROOMSTICKS

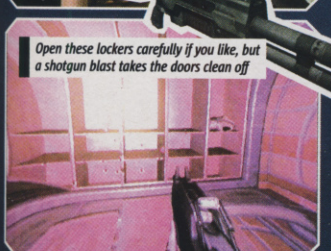
Shooting things saves time of course, and looks pretty great, especially in this game. Just watch those guards fly backwards!

Weapons are fairly standard, ranging from pistols through to shotguns and assault rifles, complete with torches attached that are used to blind and disorientate as well as search. In addition to shooting down the enemy, you can pepper the surroundings, sometimes finding secrets.

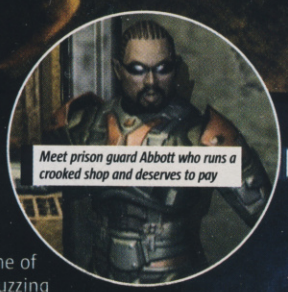
We're glad the guns in this future still go bang and spray red-hot bullets everywhere!



For some reason the smallest gun in the game is the most accurate. Great for sniping



Open these lockers carefully if you like, but a shotgun blast takes the doors clean off



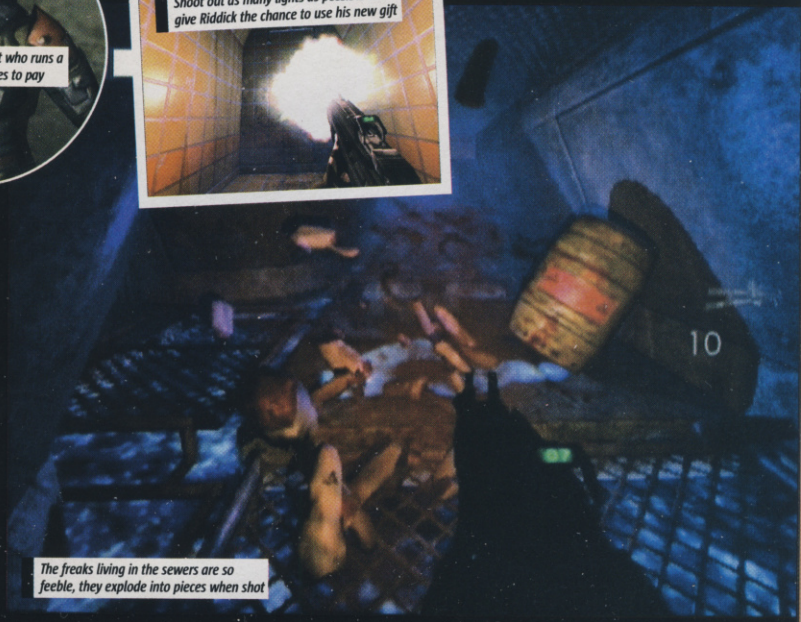
Meet prison guard Abbott who runs a crooked shop and deserves to pay

shooters were concerned, the hits of the event were expected to be, in no particular order, Doom III, Halo 2, and Half-Life 2. However, by lunchtime of day one the floor was buzzing with talk of Chronicles Of Riddick. "Have you seen it yet? Have you played it yet? It's supposed to be awesome!"

STOP THE SHOW I WANT TO GET OFF

We love it when this happens, when a game stands on the strength of its own merit rather than on the shaky foundations of a corny marketing campaign. Although the Doom, Halo and Half-Life sequels did well to further their cause as bleeding-edge blasters of the highest degree, the fact Riddick stole a place among them by word of mouth in a matter of hours is really quite something.

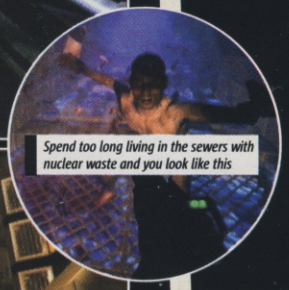
So here we are, to pick up on that buzz and get closer to what Escape From Butcher Bay is about.



The freaks living in the sewers are so feeble, they explode into pieces when shot

"Action is pretty much relentless as Riddick causes riots to escape confinement"

This is Riddick, blasting someone's head off with their own shotgun. Straight to the morgue for you, matey



Spend too long living in the sewers with nuclear waste and you look like this

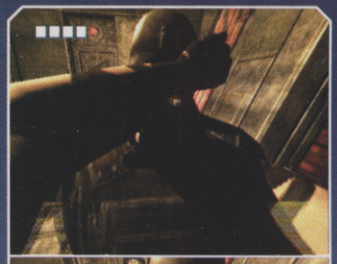
Look down and you can see Riddick's feet. They're tiny and you know what that says

Goddamn, this fake hand tan doesn't match my face at all

NICE TO BEAT YOU

Riddick's close-quarters combat is often more fun than blasting away with guns.

Sometimes it's more effective to get up close and personal for pummelling someone's face, or grab hold of their gun and turn it against them – helps conserve ammo anyway!



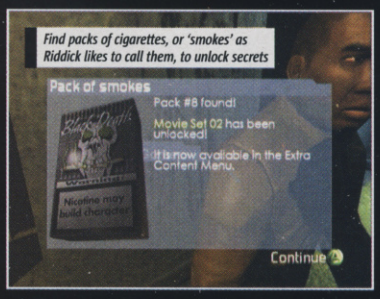
Sneak up behind a guy, grab a hold of his head, and twist it like a lemon. Snap!

say Butcher's Bay doesn't just look great, it looks... Normal! Also, to help literally give everything the extra edge, the lighting and shadowing techniques used in the Riddick game are up there with the very best possible. All this is perfect for a game that places such an emphasis on the contrast between light and dark.

BEING VIN DIESEL

When it comes to becoming Riddick within the game, you get a sense of Vin Diesel's involvement. Riddick's persona as a videogame character is so much more credible than we're used to from cinema-to-console translations, presumably because Diesel has been an advisor at crucial stages of the game's development.

It means that Riddick in the game becomes more than a mannequin wearing Vin's face. The experience is aided by interweaving third-person views for anytime Riddick holds a conversation that's more articulate than a bullet or a smack to the mouth, also when Riddick is clambering around obstacles. It's Vin's dulcet tones that you hear (feel!) reverberating when Riddick talks, and pure Vin-genius as he cockily tilts his head to one side or playfully handles a shotgun like it's a straw from Burger King.



Find packs of cigarettes, or 'smokes' as Riddick likes to call them, to unlock secrets

You really start to believe you're Riddick, however, when you get into the swing of throwing punches and counter-attacking using your arms instead of always responding with gunfire. Got two strong arms, use them! That's the gist of it. As Riddick you can throw combinations of uppercuts, jabs and hooks – preferably with a knuckle-duster.

Even better, you can grab hold of a rifle that's poked at you, reverse the weapon and blow the other guy's brains out. Actually, you're spared the graphic detail but the motion is all there and it's very cool, in particular because of the way all enemies collapse in a heap when they're cut down. Riddick's party trick, though, is breaking necks, but this isn't quite so straightforward as it requires stealth to get the chance to pull it off.

SEEING THINGS HIS WAY

Action is pretty much relentless in Butcher's Bay, as Riddick causes riots to escape confinement. But while you're beating on inmates' heads or sniping at guards with pinpoint accuracy, you must also consider stealth to succeed.

Which is how Riddick's Eye Shine comes into play, in addition to his innate ability to sense danger. The early stages of the game are played without his (mid)night vision ability. Early on, the only advantage Riddick has over his enemies is an awareness of visibility to his prey, depicted

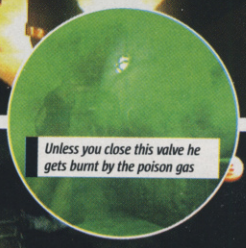
Little known fact: Riddick is a master shadow puppeteer. See: looks just like a shotgun!

ADMIRING YOUR HANDY WORK

Sometimes it's necessary to be a little gentler with things. To manipulate objects that don't need to be killed, such as light switches, doors to ventilation shafts and service panels, only one context-sensitive button is used.

This same button enables conversations, and you often have a choice of how to answer back, sometimes affecting how people react to Riddick.

Only way through here is if Riddick can break off chunks of wall with his bare hands



Unless you close this valve he gets burnt by the poison gas

The same action button is used to drag bodies into shadows to prevent the alarm being raised

Explosions look really impressive, in fact they leave an impression – look! Cool!!

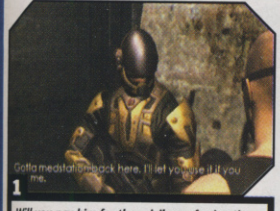
as blue-tinted vision. This enables you to plan ambushes from the shadows, and helps you sneak up behind someone to, say, snap his scrawny neck!

It's only after meeting a character called Pope Joe that Riddick gains his Eye Shine, in return for a small errand. With Eye Shine the whole game opens up, with Riddick shooting out lights to create a world of darkness for his rose-tinted vision to exploit. Butcher Bay becomes Riddick's playground, and gamers get a cooler alternative to old green night vision.

PINT OF MILK, PACKET OF BISCUITS...

When he's not busy not cracking heads, Riddick is asked to run some errands for people in return for help.

That these errands usually involve cracking more heads is only to be expected from inmates at Butcher Bay pen, but there are worthier requests.

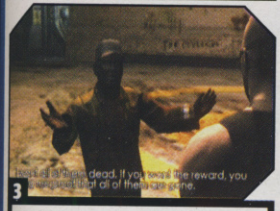


1

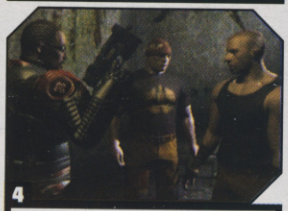
Will you pay him for the privilege of using the med centre, or tell him to shove it?

2

Kill a guy called Molina to impress the inmates and claim your reward? Oh, okay then



Do what he says and you'll be richly rewarded, or possibly stitched up like a pig!



4

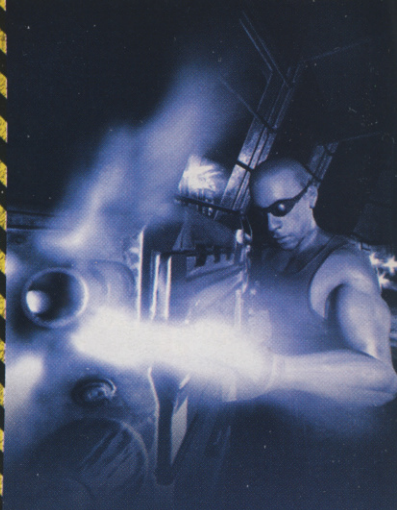
Riddick is caught in a triangle of hate involving one of the head guards and an inmate

TIED FOR FIRST PLACE

Just as there's more to Richard B. Riddick than meets the average eye, Escape from Butcher Bay is smarter than your average movie tie-in. For a major Hollywood star to lend more than just their physical appearance and/or voice to a game is unheard of. As Vin has treated Butcher Bay as a true extension of his silver screen persona, and 'cos he understands videogames enough to know what really works, the guys at Tigon have created a first of a kind: an action game in which the hero retains the charisma and mystique of its equal in the movies.

In fact we should say that Butcher Bay doesn't feel like a tie-in at all, instead it's a different treatment of the Riddick theme that manages to be as smart and sturdy as Riddick himself. ✷

NanoMED Stations heal Riddick, and boost his overall stamina by one block. Nice



RIDDICK-ULOUS OR A REAL GAS?

WE'VE PLAYED IT TILL OUR EYES BLED. THE VERDICT...

ALEX SIMMONS

Riddick manages to do the impossible – it captures the filmic feel and look of a Hollywood blockbuster and backs it up with some cracking gameplay.

Butcher Bay in particular feels like a living, breathing, stinking hell-hole of a prison with inmates howling and fighting behind cell doors – escape is not an option, it's essential, and luckily Riddick makes the jailbreak great fun.

PETER WALKER

After playing like a million stealth games recently, I'm even fed up with Sam Fisher (Gasp!). Riddick's sneakage element is clean and simple and somehow I like it.

It's obvious when you are or aren't hidden from view so there's no faffing around looking for darkened corners. It's cool the way you explode from the shadows and properly brutalise your victims. It's stealth on steroids.

PAUL DAVIES

One of the telltale signs for me to know if a game is good is that I want to know everything about it – buy the T-shirt, the whole thing.

Riddick, the game, captures so much of Vin Diesel's character portrayal I'm getting such a buzz from pretending he's really me. Of course this wouldn't be so effective if the game mechanics weren't so pleasing to deal with. The action is brutal but satisfying in a cool way.

GRAEME BOYD

Vin Diesel is one of the coolest movie action hero's around at the moment, and the game properly makes you feel like you're rippling with his rock hard muscles.

Which is a good thing. As is the crazy mix of styles of gameplay. They really shouldn't work together, but they do. It doesn't feel like a shooter with some bits of beat 'em up thrown in: it all feels equally important and equally kickass. Great stuff.

MIKE COOPER

It's encouraging to see a Hollywood star like Vin treating games with such respect, setting up his own studio and ensuring this is one title that does the licence justice.

It's an impressive first effort from Tigon and is certainly shaping up to be one of the Summer's must-have shooters, but I'm not entirely convinced by the visuals. At a distance it looks amazing, but up close objects and characters seem a bit lo-res.

JAIME SMITH

I loved the original Pitch Black movie and was already excited about the new one before seeing the game, so the fact it looks gorily great is a real bonus.

Movie licensed games tend to leave me cold – something to do with the fact that like 90% of them are so obviously cheap cash-ins. I'm quite into Warner Brothers' idea of charging more royalties for crap games if it means film spin-offs get better, but in this case the developer deserves a fat bonus.

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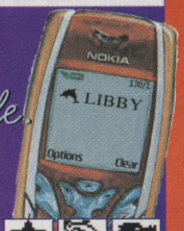

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BREATHE EASY - blue#	113599
ALL DAY LONG I .. - jc chasez	114171
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WHITE FLAG - dido #	112837
DRIVE - shannon noll	113934
WHAT ABOUT ME - shannon noll	113629
AIR HOSTESS - busted	113414
SINGLE - natasha bedingfield	113888
DON'T TELL ME - avril lavigne	113682
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JUMP - girls aloud #	113183
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MUSICOLOGY - prince	113915

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TRICK ME - kelis	113804
THROUGH DA WIRE - kanye west	113622
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SHE WANTS TO MOVE - n.e.r.d	113539
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FORGET ABOUT DRE - dr dre	111138
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8 MILE - eminem #	112376
X GONNA GIVE IT TO YA - dmx	112617
SUGA SUGA - baby bash feat frankie j	113106
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dance

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REVIEWS

FULLY INDEPENDENT & MULTIFORMAT ✶ TRUST NO-ONE ELSE

P6 **Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow**
Sam sneaks his stealthy ass onto Sony's machine. Was it worth the wait or should he have stayed in the shadows?

80 **ShellShock Nam '67**
Hard-hitting 'Nam shooter from Killzone developers Guerrilla feels the full force of CVG's review Napalm. Does it get out alive?

84 **Shadow Ops**
First-person shooter with cinema-screen theatrics and Hollywood standard presentation. But is it a blockbuster or a gobble-gobble turkey?

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Forty quid's a lot of cash. It's fine if you get an amazing game for your greens, but a total stinker if you get ripped off. You want value for money, we want value for money: that's why CVG's reviews are the most accurate and balls-out honest you'll read ANYWHERE. Sure, big names like Driv3r, Athens 2004, Shadow Ops and Shellshock might not get the big scores you'd expect, but you'll know when you splash out on a CVG Gold rated game like Splinter Cell: PT you're getting the very best. Forty quid's a lot of money – stick with CVG and you won't waste it.

Graeme Boyd

Graeme Boyd *Team CVG*

CVG'S BIG REVIEW P68

DRIV3R

"AS SOON AS WE SAT DOWN WITH DRIV3R WE COULD FEEL THE NAUSEA CREEPING UP OUR THROATS"

THIS MONTH

DRIV3R ..... 68 PS2 XBOX
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RICHARD BURNS RALLY ..... 74 PS2 XBOX PC
SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW 76 PS2
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GRAPHICS How sharp it looks, smoothly it moves, how good the effects are... That's all covered here

SOUND Does the sound, whether it's ambient noise or a killer soundtrack, complement the game? If so, expect a high score

GAMEPLAY Is it fun, fresh and addictive as hell? If a game scores well here, we guarantee it's great fun to play

LASTING APPEAL It may be great fun, but is it all over in a flash? Or will it last for months?

OVERALL Taking everything into account, is it actually any good? (Note: this is not an average of the other scores)

HOW IT COMPARES ... to games you've probably already played. The longer the bar, the better the game. Simple.

CVG SCORES

By popular demand, CVG has switched to percentages to bring you the most precisely calculated scores ever!

95+ DIAMOND Award

90-94+ GOLD Award

85-89+ SILVER Award

75-84+ You'd be pleased to get this as a gift, though next month you'll probably forget you own it.

65-74+ Some fun to be had but one best bought by your mate so you can get a lend of it.

55-64+ A pretty average game that's unlikely to set the gaming world on fire on any level.

41-54+ You really shouldn't even consider renting one of these, let alone buying one.

UNDER 40 STINKER Award

THE CVG AWARDS SYSTEM

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DIAMOND Award
The most coveted award a game can get. It's worth buying the console just to play it!

GOLD Award
A bloody amazing game you've got to own. It's brilliant in almost every respect, so go get it!

SILVER Award
Highly recommended by CVG's experts. May not be anything ground-breaking but it's still ace.

STINKER Award
More abominable than a reality TV show, set in a barbers, called "I'm a Yeti..."

RELEASE DATE
OUT NOW

GAME INFO
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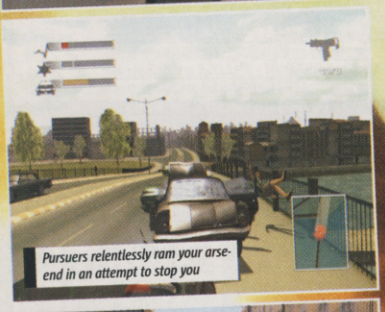
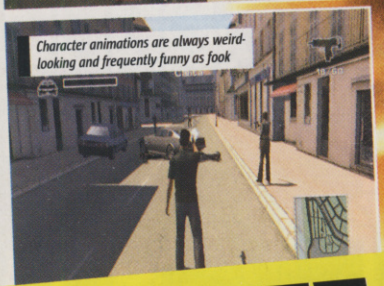
Getting chased in little dingers loaded up with explosives is just annoying


Pursuers relentlessly ram your arse-end in an attempt to stop you


Character animations are always weird-looking and frequently funny as fook

DRIV3R

Tanner drops to the arse-end of the underworld with a criminal let-down

Go on then, we'll give Driv3r recognition for the superb car damage model

Anticipation. It can be an amazing thing. Like when you've finally pulled that girl you fancy, and you're just about to move in for the first kiss. Wicked.

But what if, when you actually locked lips, you noticed she had a big cold sore oozing pus into your moosh? And her breath ACTUALLY smelt like dog crap? The anticipation would melt away into a bubbling cesspool of disgust, and you'd probably chunder into her gob.

When we stuck Tanner on the cover in CVG 272 we did express our worries at the dodgy on-foot stuff, the frustrating mission structure and the slightly weird-looking graphics, but we couldn't stop ourselves from still being excited about Driv3r. After all, this is the third game in a series that basically invented the free-roaming driving game. Driver 2 was a bit ropey, but surely they'd have sorted it out by now?

Nope. As soon as we sat down with the finished version of Driv3r we could feel the nausea creeping up our throats. Just like finally kissing that stank-assed girl, this is a sickening disappointment.

MOVIE MAGIC

It all starts so promisingly. The intro movie looks superb, the Iggy Pop soundtrack is cool and trippy, and the star-studded credits reek of big-budget Hollywood production values. Fade to black.

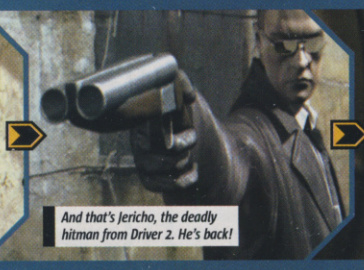
■ Driv3r's intro movie is worthy of a CVG Diamond award. It's Istanbul in the blazing sun. A police car cruises down a sidestreet.

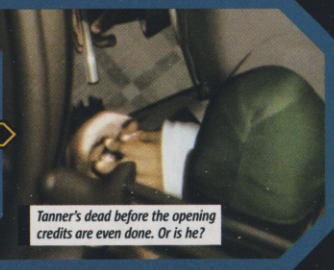
DRIVIN' TO HOLLYWOOD

Then it all busts off. Tanner joins a raging firefight, gets capped, and ends up in a Turkish Emergency Ward. Is he dead?

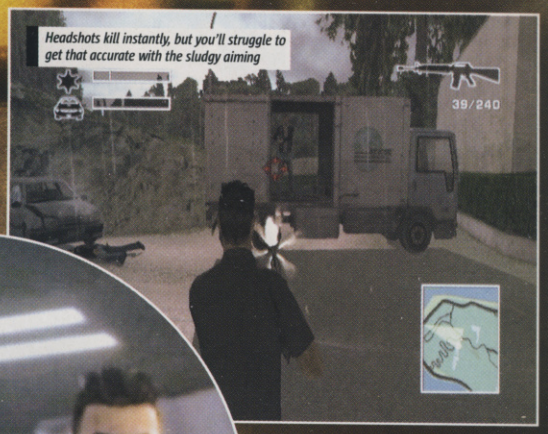
It's a clever end-at-the-beginning-type narrative thing, see?

Here's Tanner, looking like he's been caning the pies since Driver 2

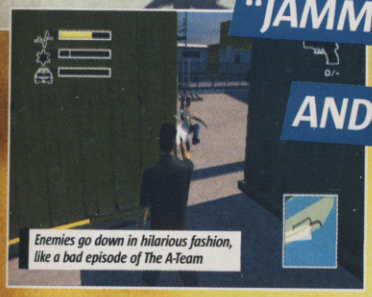

And that's Jericho, the deadly hitman from Driver 2. He's back!


Tanner's dead before the opening credits are even done. Or is he?

There are cool moments, like ramming a car loaded with explosives into a truck

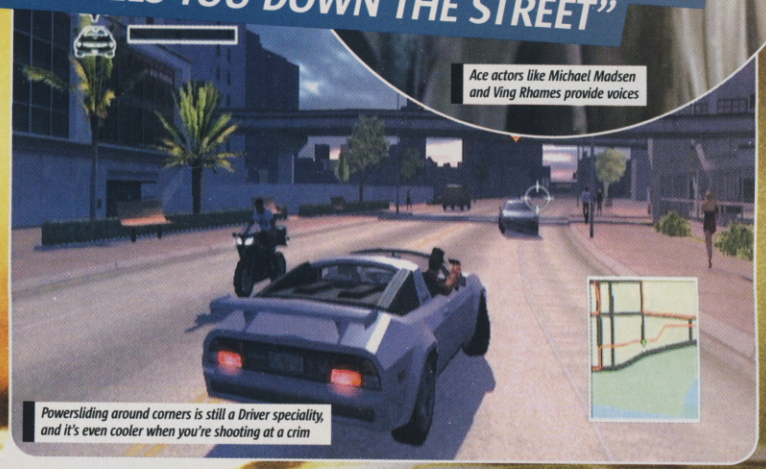


Headshots kill instantly, but you'll struggle to get that accurate with the sludgy aiming

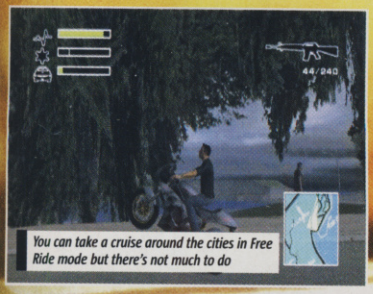


Enemies go down in hilarious fashion, like a bad episode of The A-Team

"JAMMING THE ACCELERATOR SQUEEZES A RASPY ROAR OUT OF YOUR ENGINE AND PROPELS YOU DOWN THE STREET"

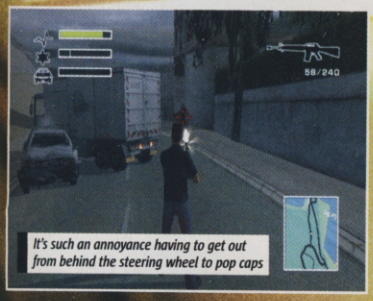


Ace actors like Michael Madsen and Ving Rhames provide voices

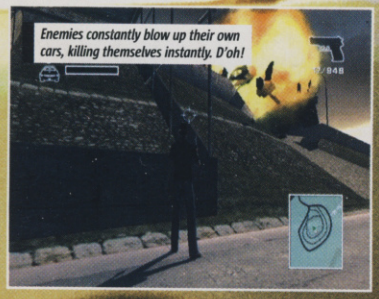


You can take a cruise around the cities in Free Ride mode but there's not much to do

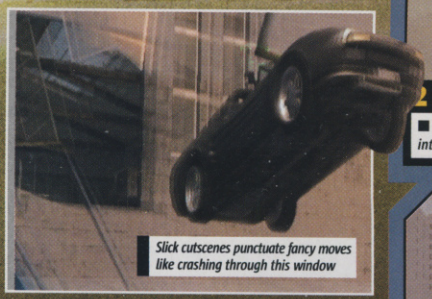
Powersliding around corners is still a Driver speciality, and it's even cooler when you're shooting at a crim



It's such an annoyance having to get out from behind the steering wheel to pop caps



Enemies constantly blow up their own cars, killing themselves instantly. D'oh!



Slick cutscenes punctuate fancy moves like crashing through this window

CHASE HQ

Driv3r's not trying to be like GTA. Driv3r is all about car chases and providing the ultimate Hollywood pursuits on console.

At least, that's what Atari keeps telling us. The brutal truth is that all too soon Driv3r's chases become bit dull and predictable, and certainly never get to the levels of insanity seen in GTA's 'most wanted' manhunts.

1 ■ Here they come... Your pursuers do stick to your arse admirably – it's tough to shake 'em

2 ■ You can try and run them into traffic but they react intelligently to obstacles

3 ■ Let them get too close and they'll shunt your back-end, sending you spinning

4 ■ But bizarrely, for a game that's built around chases, there are few really memorable pursuits

The game engine kicks in, and Tanner, who a minute ago looked smoothly hardcore in the FMV, dodders across the screen like a moonwalking pensioner. He's in his apartment, a hollow square that looks like it's had a PSone-style Changing Rooms makeover.

You're in control now, and it feels weird. The controls are FPS-style, with the left analog stick controlling the direction you move in and the right analog stick letting you look around. Moving forwards and back and strafing is okay, but the free-look on the right stick feels sluggish and imprecise. Already the game is making things difficult.

TAKE IT TO THE SCRAPPER

One thing Driv3r does better than almost any game out there is the car damage: Bits of motor pop off like a leper drops fingers as you bang and shunt.

Manage to get out onto the street and into your motor and there's a delicious moment of relief. Thank the sweet Lord that Driv3r at least drives well. Jamming the accelerator squeezes a raspy roar out of your engine and propels you down the busy Miami street. Seeing a junction, you yank the handbrake, and carve a growling but graceful sweep through stunned traffic as you fight the oversteer.

But hold on: those buildings look a bit basic. In fact, they look positively plain, like 1990 3D graphics plopped down in the middle of 2004 Miami. And they're popping up everywhere like boners at the Miss World Swimsuit Contest. Oh dear.

Finally, after an uneventful drive through lifeless scenery, you reach the Miami PD building and nip inside for a go on the firing range. You're only shooting target boards and it's a struggle to drag the aiming reticule over them. What the hell?

At this point, ten minutes into the game, if it didn't have the Driv3r logo on the box we'd be mocking the elementary visuals, the useless third-person shooting and cracking up over Tanner's funny walk. The horrible truth is we were stunned into miserable, deflated silence.

TRUCK YOU

This is Driv3r, though, one of the most eagerly awaited games of the decade. Surely it can't be THAT bad. Okay, so the graphics improve immensely after you leave Miami, making us wonder if it was finished long before Nice and Istanbul's »

The plot? It's okay, but it doesn't make much sense and the scripts are a bit dodgy

GRAND THEFT AUTO

In truth, GTA III nicked loads of ideas from Driver 2, and in retaliation Driv3r's hotwired a whole repo yard of vehicles to thrash around Miami, Nice and Istanbul.

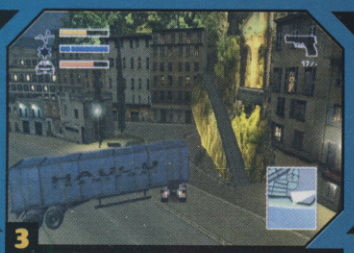
In a nod to Vice City there are even motorbikes, and Tanner's just as nifty at wheelies and stoppies as Tommy – although Driv3r won't reward you for your skills.

1

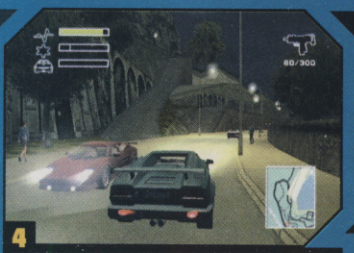
■ The bikes are great fun to ride and let you slip through busy traffic like warm shite off a shovel

2

■ The boats aren't quite as satisfying – they feel utterly lifeless, as if they're gliding across the water

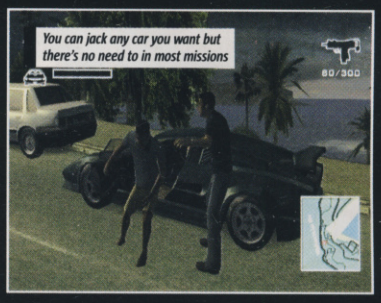

3

■ Trucks are great for bashing through roadblocks, but wait until you have to reverse the damn thing



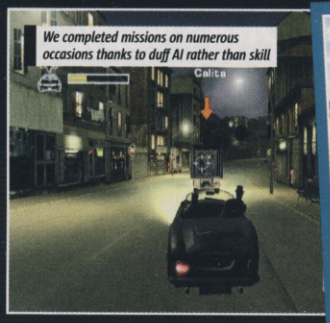
4

■ The hottest motors, like this Lambo-a-like, are super-fast but you rarely get to use 'em



You can jack any car you want but there's no need to in most missions

Director mode is fun if you like that sort of thing, but we would've preferred more quality in the game itself



We completed missions on numerous occasions thanks to duff AI rather than skill

impressive cityscapes were constructed. Nevertheless, the pop-up is an inescapable annoyance, especially when solid objects shazam out of nothing right in front of your speeding motor.

Talking of speeding motors, the driving sections still stand up as solid street-smokin' fun. The cars handle with a happily hyperactive looseness, with your arse-end ready to swing out at the slightest brush of the brake pedal.

There are over 70 vehicles in the game, from mopeds to motorcycles to high-powered muscle cars to articulated trucks. You're free to jack any vehicle and they all handle with a degree of individuality. Motorbikes are loads of fun and endlessly chuckable around corners, but too many of the motors feel lifeless or just plain boring. The boats, including your super-fast Cigarette speedboat, skim across water like it's not even there, and while the massive trucks look cool they're about as much fun to handle as your gran's boobs.

But even the competent driving is written off by the mission structure. Chuck all ideas of GTA-style freedom out of your head – Driv3r is linear with a capital L. You can take a free-ride around the three cities and try some mini-games but the main story mode is played as sequential, closed-ended missions. Basically you start a mission and, until you've finished it, there's nothing else you can do.

In an early mission you've got to shoot your way into a motel then chase a crim as he speeds off in his motor. Lose him and you're instantly chucked back to the very start of the mission, with an irritating 20-second cutscene – YOU CAN'T SKIP – to keep you company. Muck it up a couple of times and your desire to progress is fuelled less by fun and more by spitting, screaming RAGE.

This type of agonising repetition happens repeatedly. It's a fundamental flaw in Driv3r's design, made worse by the fact we finished it in just SEVEN hours. Sure, the original played the same way, but that was 1999 for chrissakes – we've played GTA: Vice City and True Crime since then. Things have changed. Driv3r hasn't.

Most missions are so annoying you won't want to go play them again

MISSION THE POINT

Driv3r suffers from a weird affliction: the missions sound cool in theory, but in practice they're dumb, irritating and frustrating.

Difficulty is achieved by far-flung checkpoints and vicious time limits. All too often you're punished for the smallest muck-up with a restart, and since the dodgy controls and dangerous pop-up make life even more difficult you'll be road-raging in no time.

■ This mission requires you to nick three cars and load them onto this moving trailer. Why? Exactly

1

2

■ Nicking cars is easy, but you've got to be ultra fast and the stodgy controls don't make life any easier

■ Then you've got to get the damn things on the truck, which can be a right bastard. One tiny mistake and you gotta restart AND DO IT ALL AGAIN AAAAARGH!

3

SHOT IN THE FOOT

And the on-foot stuff? Do we have to talk about it? Alright then, but we don't enjoy sticking the boot into an aspect of Driv3r so rubbish it's embarrassing.

The main problem is the movement speed produced by each analog stick doesn't match, so while the left stick produces sensitive jerks the right stick drags your aim across the screen like a sleepy sloth. Against a couple of enemies gunfights are stupidly comedic, and when you're surrounded the sludgy turning circle and inaccurate targeting make it impossible to defend yourself.

It's almost funny. No, it IS funny, especially when you punchline it with the unbelievably poor enemy AI. Remember

"CHUCK ALL IDEAS OF GTA-STYLE FREEDOM OUT OF YOUR HEAD – DRIV3R IS LINEAR WITH A CAPITAL L"

You're totally handcuffed into missions and there's almost no choice in how you approach them

"YOU NEVER GET THE SENSE THERE'S MUCH GOING ON OUTSIDE THE PLOT"

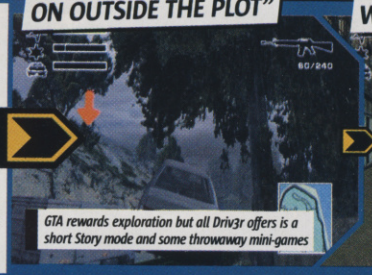
"WE HATE HAVING TO RESTART A MISSION EVERY TIME WE CLIP A LAMPPOST"

"THE ON-FOOT STUFF STILL SEEMS A LONG WAY FROM COMPLETION"

"HAS THE POTENTIAL TO CREATE VIVID, ACTION-PACKED CAR CHASES"

■ We went undercover with Driv3r back in CVG 272 and prepared our own rap sheet on the game's crimes. It still had time to go straight and sort itself out, but our advice was ignored. Here's some of our criticisms and how they've worked out in the final game...

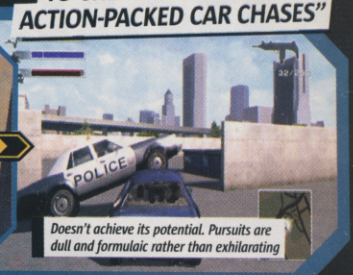
UNDER-COVER STORY



GTA rewards exploration but all Driv3r offers is a short Story mode and some throwaway mini-games

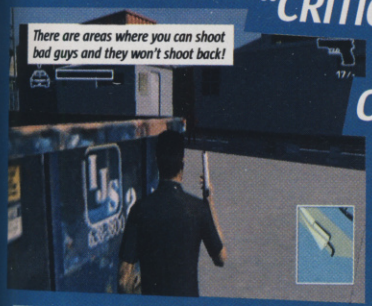
Almost every mission still demands exhausting perfection resulting in extreme frustration

The on-foot stuff STILL feels a long way from completion. It drags the whole game down

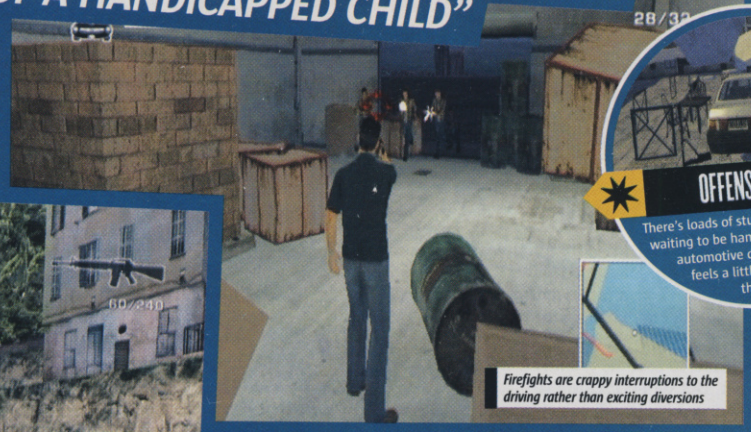


Doesn't achieve its potential. Pursuits are dull and formulaic rather than exhilarating

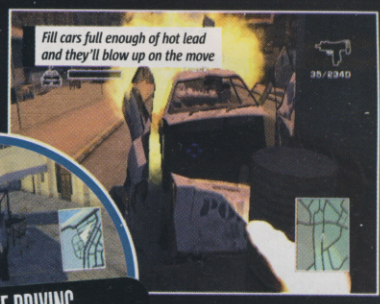
"CRITICISING THE ON-FOOT STUFF FEELS UNFAIR, LIKE TAKING THE MICKEY OUT OF A HANDICAPPED CHILD"



There are areas where you can shoot bad guys and they won't shoot back!



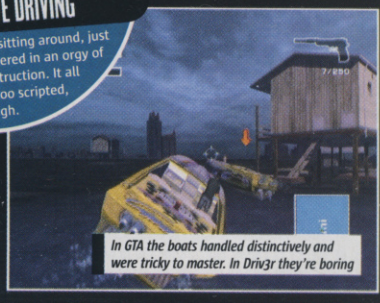
Firefights are crappy interruptions to the driving rather than exciting diversions



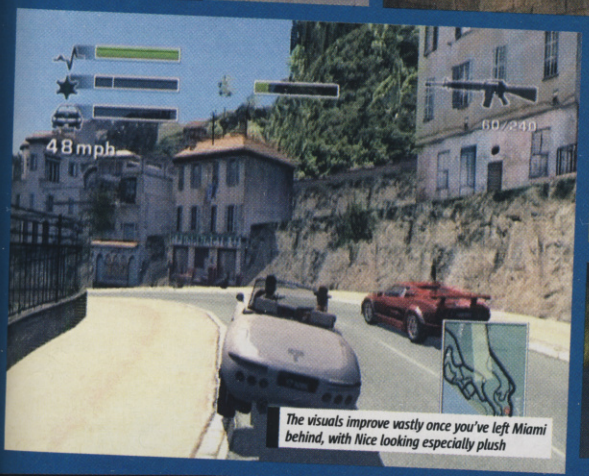
Fill cars full enough of hot lead and they'll blow up on the move

OFFENSIVE DRIVING

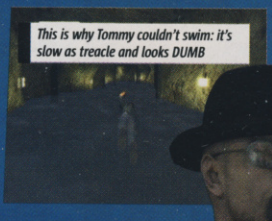
There's loads of stuff sitting around, just waiting to be hammered in an orgy of automotive destruction. It all feels a little too scripted, though.



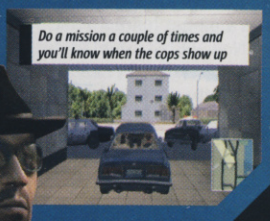
In GTA the boats handled distinctively and were tricky to master. In Driv3r they're boring



The visuals improve vastly once you've left Miami behind, with Nice looking especially plush



This is why Tommy couldn't swim: it's slow as treacle and looks DUMB



Do a mission a couple of times and you'll know when the cops show up

CVG 2ND OPINION

ALEX

Playing this is like living in a world where GTA doesn't exist and games are linear and frustrating. 1999, basically, which happens to be when the first Driver game came out. Driv3r is glossier but too much effort has gone on the presentation, leaving the out-of-date gameplay idling at the kerbside. Should have been ace; instead it's a real disappointment.

PREVIOUS GAMES

■ Destruction Derby, Destruction Derby 2, Driver, Driver 2, Stuntman

HARD FACTS

■ Number of cities: 3
■ Number of weapons: 9
■ Number of vehicles: 70
■ Our disappointment in numeric form: 9, 947, 984

DID YOU KNOW?

■ If you really must try out Driv3r for yourself, remember to take a fat load of cash along to the game shop – at £44.99, it's a fiver more than most other brand new games!

those retro shoot 'em ups where enemies followed a pre-set pattern? The bad guys in Driv3r do that. They run like retards to the spot where they're allowed to start shooting, or pop their dumbass heads around corners in a painfully stilted manner.

Okay, there's load of different weapons, shooting objects sends them skittering about realistically and impressive explosions rain chunks of automobile onto the sidewalk. But to focus on these small plus points wouldn't be so much polishing a turd, as sandblasting it, spraying it with Chanel No 5 and tying a pink ribbon round it.

It gives us no pleasure to criticise Driv3r's out of car stuff. It almost feels unfair, like taking the mickey out of a handicapped child. But the fact is Driver 2's on-foot sections were ropey, we pointed out in CVG 272 that Driv3r's on-foot sections were ropey, and GTA and True Crime have done it loads better.

Look at the score. It's not SO bad. That in itself should show just how disappointed we are in Driv3r. It should have been an event – a wicked return to form for one of videogaming's coolest titles and one of the biggest releases of the year.

In reality it's a such a massive let-down that we feel empty.

We were anticipating a turbo-charged GTA-style driving game that nailed the behind-the-wheel stuff and perfected the on-foot stuff.

We ended up with a driving game limited by a linear structure and a crippled third-person shooter.

Anticipation? It's overrated. ✷

CVG VERDICT

GRAEME

GRAPHICS 76
Miami looks awful, Nice and Istanbul are beautiful but too much pop-up and jerks

SOUND 84
The one area Driv3r nails. Great soundtrack, sweet SFX, and Hollywood voiceovers

GAMEPLAY 57
Diamond driving horrendously crippled by stinking on-foot sections and stiff linearity

LASTING APPEAL 67
Viciously frustrating, and short – even if you've got the patience to get through it

BLOWING THE ENGINE

At least the explosions look cool, and they've definitely improved over the last couple of months.

They're big and blazin', and shower massive chunks of bodywork onto the streets that you can then riddle with bullets to send them skittering across the tarmac. It certainly looks cool, and it's a sure-fire way to clear out some pussy-assed bad guys taking cover behind a car...

■ Bad dude taking cover behind his motor? Aim your bullets at the engine and the fuel tank...

■ ...and the car will catch fire, sizzle gently, then explode in a big ball of flames. Ba-BOOM!

■ Anyone in the vicinity will be thrown through the air or cop it from the falling debris!

We want to love it, but it's such a frustrating mess that we can't. Not just the disappointment of the year, one of the biggest gaming disappointments ever

OVERALL SCORE 64

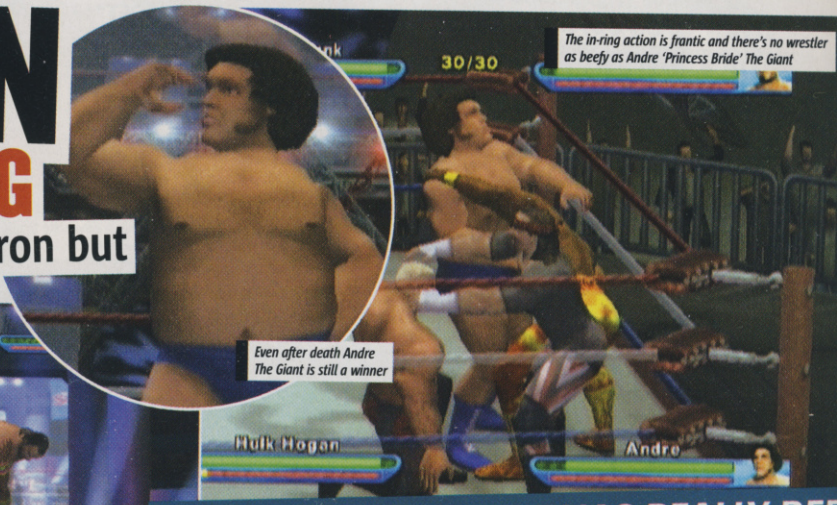
HOW IT COMPARES
GTA: VICE CITY
DRIV3R
TRUE CRIME STREETS OF L.A.

RELEASE DATE
2 JULY

GAME INFO
COST: £39.99
PLAYERS: 1-4

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: ACCLAIM
- DEV: ACCLAIM
- WWW.LEGENDSSHOWDOWN.COM
- CONTACT: 020 7344 5000

SHOWDOWN
LEGENDS OF WRESTLING
They may have pumped their last iron but they still love a good beating



The in-ring action is frantic and there's no wrestler as beefy as Andre 'Princess Bride' The Giant

Even after death Andre The Giant is still a winner

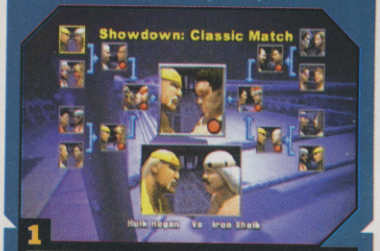
Ultimate Warrior doesn't want to find out how Macho Man Randy Savage got his nickname

"THE WRESTLING SIDE HAS REALLY BEEN BEEFED UP WITH ACTION FLOWING BACK AND FORTH LIKE ONLY WRESTLING CAN"

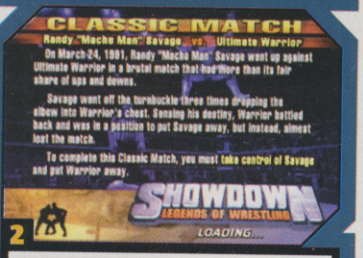
FIGHT NIGHT

One very cool mode is Classic Matches that allows you to recreate some of the most famous bouts between the roster of wrestling relics.

It plays like the Scenario mode from the old ISS games, where you pick up the action at a crucial turning point in the bout. It's a great way to relive not only the famous fights, but also learn a little bit of wrestling history too.



1 There's 15 Classic Matches for you to grapple your way through, and no more classic grappler than Hulk



2 While the Classic Match is loading you can read about what made it so memorable way back then

The Legends Of Wrestling series has been a bit of a ginger-haired step child so far. We've wanted to love it, we loved the idea, but when it came to playing with the damn thing, we just couldn't forget that it was a ginger haired freak.

Now with its third attempt it seems Acclaim has had the sense to go out and buy some hair dye and attached some industrial strength braces to the kid that hit every branch on the ugly tree. The result is the game that we were hoping for all along. One where wrestling greats never die, where firm pecs don't go soft and where button-bashing doesn't save the day.

PREVIOUS GAMES
- Legends of Wrestling, Legends of Wrestling 2

HARD FACTS
- 73 classic wrestlers
- 18 arenas including MSG and Wembley
- 15 classic matches

DID YOU KNOW?
- Showdown even boasts the late comedian Andy Kaufman who appeared in the hit TV show Taxi alongside his minor wrestling career

IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME

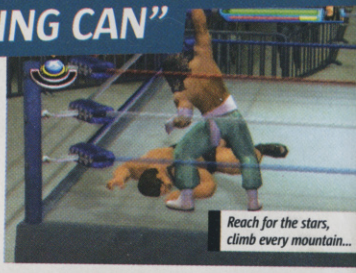
The concept of Showdown: LOW is simple. Take all the classic wrestlers from the last 30 years of the sport, recreate them in their prime with their famous moves and allow them to get it on. It's a great idea that other sporting series have been slow to take up. Imagine a FIFA game with every classic side from the last 30 years – how cool would it be to settle old arguments?

Anyway, back to the wrestling. The only thing that has stopped the LOW games from reaching stellar heights has been that a certain SmackDown! series which has continually kicked sand in the face of anyone trying to tip it from its perch. And while Showdown doesn't achieve the feat of surpassing SmackDown!, it does come closer than most.

KING OF THE RING

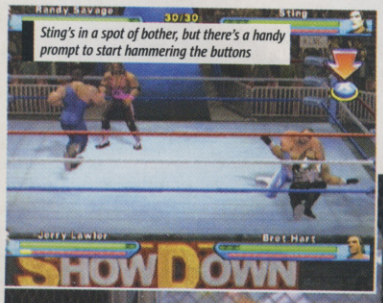
Now with a roster of over 70 classic wrestlers and plenty of different play modes, Showdown offers loads of variety and ways to play. Graphically the title has made huge advances, with each wrestler now easily identifiable and the arenas enjoying a solid makeover. But it's the wrestling side that has really been beefed up. A new control system finally makes the action flow back and forth like only wrestling can. Plus the controls are easy to learn and get you into the thick of the action fast, pulling off fancy moves.

Okay, so it's still not a SmackDown! beater quite yet, but this series has definitely taken a step up from the minor leagues. ✷



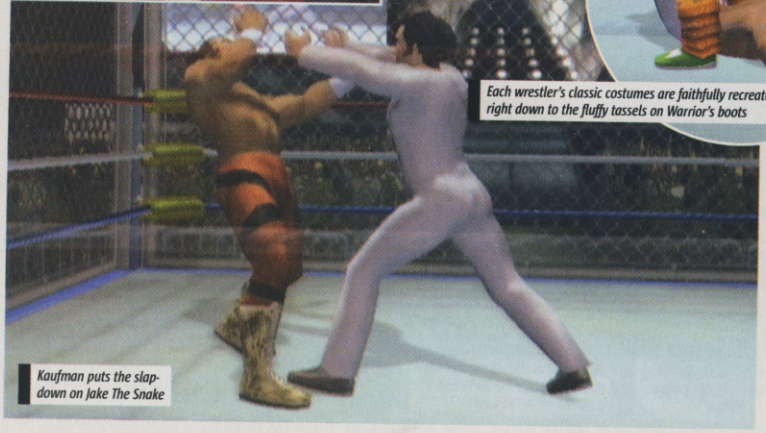
Reach for the stars, climb every mountain...

Jim Duggan gets a little carried away with the action



Sting's in a spot of bother, but there's a handy prompt to start hammering the buttons

Each wrestler's classic costumes are faithfully recreated, right down to the fluffy tassels on Warrior's boots



Kaufman puts the slap-down on Jake The Snake

Accidents like this can happen when you're wearing too much spandex and baby oil

CVG VERDICT

ALEX H

GRAPHICS 8
Solid, easily identifiable characters and great looking locations

SOUND 8
Lots of grunts, groans and even a play-by-play commentary

GAMEPLAY 8
The in-ring action finally feels right and it's easy to remember the moves

LASTING APPEAL 8
Great selection of different modes and ways that you can play

If you love the sport and especially the wrestlers of yesteryear then Showdown is a blast with plenty of new ideas to keep the series on the right track.

OVERALL SCORE 80

HOW IT COMPARES
- SMACKDOWN: HCTP
- SHOWDOWN: LOW
- WWE RAW 2

RELEASE DATE
OUT NOW

GAME INFO
COST: £39.99
PLAYERS: 1-4

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: EMPIRE INTERACTIVE
- DEV: SUPERSONIC
- WWW.EMPIREINTERACTIVE.COM
- CONTACT: 020 8343 7337

XBOX | PS2 | PC CD ROM

MASHED

Mad-ass multiplayer mayhem that really busts your ribs

If you're knocked out, get revenge with an air strike. The cross-hair marks the spot

The pink weapons icon is hovering over a shortcut, but it's a tricky one. Worth the risk?

Race through traffic trying to stop the car with the flag, in this case a fugitive

In this multiplayer mode it's the guy holding the flag who scores at the next checkpoint

Just as once in every generation a Slayer is chosen (or used to be), every games generation has a racer like Mashed: tiny cars whizzing around obstacle courses, with the most basic of driving techniques required to handle the breakneck pace.

Usually these games feature toys to explain the small scale, and simplistic nature. In fact, usually these games are branded Micro Machines, and we have learned to accept no substitution.

A few years ago, Circuit Breakers (a micro-style racer with a more realistic theme for PSone) caught us off guard by being pretty good. It was produced by the Micro Machines 2 team, so was on the money – though it got carried away with confusing viewing angles. Now, from the same creative minds, we have Mashed – possibly the Micro Machines 2 of its generation!

PREVIOUS GAMES
- Micro Machines 2
- Circuit Breakers
- Antz Extreme Racing

HARD FACTS
- 13 tracks to race
- 13 types of car
- 9 types of weapon

DID YOU KNOW?
- Micro Machines 2, also developed by Supersonic, features Violet Berlin (TV presenter for GamePad) as one of the racers!

UNDER THE HOOD

Read almost any Micro Machines review, and you'll come across the same one-liner: 'In single-player mode this is fun, but in multiplayer mode it's really great!' Mashed escapes such a crusty critique by offering a solid single-player challenge too.

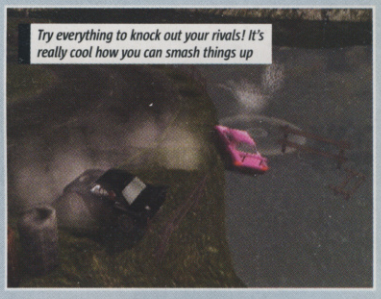
In addition to the manic race mode, solo games are kept alive by non-race themes such as The Fugitive, in which you must capture a runaway rival, and TimeBomb, where you're forced to meet checkpoints to prevent the car exploding. Even a 'standard' race is addictive, because AI levels are pitched just right to give a competitive race. You'll develop personal vendettas against AI drivers, and it's almost as satisfying to nail them as it is to destroy a mate.

THE RACE NEVER ENDS

Of course multiplayer mode is terrific in Mashed, mainly because it is such a laugh. It's more of an occasion if you make the shortcut, of which Mashed has many. You'll have more satisfaction taking out friends with the likes of twin-mounted cannons, flame-throwers and mines.

Plus, there's a wicked option unique to multiplayer, called Air Strike, where anyone knocked out of a race can target the remaining cars with missiles. Multiplayer Mashed is so funny, it's worth a spin most days of the week. ✷

Make sure you reach the next checkpoint in time, or this baby is going boom and bye-bye



Try everything to knock out your rivals! It's really cool how you can smash things up

Weapons are picked up from spinning boxes, similar to how Mario Kart handles it

WHEN CARS GET MAD

It's not the taking part that matters it's the winning, and Mashed hands you nine ways of making sure of it: weapons, baby!

We really like how you can see the weapons mounted on the cars, making them look so mean. Our favourite is the flash bomb, but we can't show it since all you can see when it goes off is a white-out. You need to know the courses well to survive it!

Don't try overtaking guys who have this twin-shooter on board, or you'll end up full of holes like Swiss cheese

When you've got the flamethrower your rivals had better watch out – hit 'em when they're helpess

We like the chaingun so much, we're having it fitted to the CVG tour bus. When we get one...

Sorta hard to make out, but the little yellow car is going to get a surprise from a pink missile

Blue is a dead cert for the scrapheap here, but it's not all over. The rocket launcher awaits!

CVG VERDICT

PAUL

GRAPHICS 84
We were pretty surprised at how cool this looks – loads of detail and great SFX

SOUND 79
Apart from some decent weapon noises, the music and effects are good but no big deal

GAMEPLAY 80
Rock-solid gameplay, playing solo or against mates. It's fun because it's uncomplicated

LASTING APPEAL 82
For multiplayer thrills, it's one of the few we'd swap PES3 for – that's saying something

A game you need to play at least one rainy afternoon to appreciate. After that we're sure you'll be hooked – if not enough to buy, at least to rent for a while.

OVERALL SCORE 81

HOW IT COMPARES
- BURNOUT 2
- MASHED
- PROJECT GOTHAM 2

RELEASE DATE 9 JULY

GAME INFO COST: £39.99 PLAYERS: 1-4

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: SCI
- DEV: WARTHOG
- WWW.RICHARDBURNSRALLY.COM
- CONTACT: 020 7585 3308

RICHARD BURNS RALLY

Hardcore rallying fuelled by obsession and powered by patience

Powersliding takes skill, precision, and plenty of guts unless you want to end up in the ditch

"YOU END UP DRIVING AROUND LIKE A PENSIONER, TERRIFIED TO TOUCH THE ACCELERATOR"

SHAKEDOWN SHOWDOWN

RBR concentrates on being the most intense and hardcore simulation out there, emphasising precision over speed and punishing you like a bad child for any transgression.

But it's not for everyone, so match your personality to the rally game of your choice...

HARDCORE!

1 ■ For the most in-depth simulation of rallying Richard Burns is your man. He's not friendly, though

RALLY FAN!

2 ■ If you like your rally but can't be arsed with all the mucking about, stick with Colin McRae 04

PETROLHEAD!

3 ■ Gran Turismo 3's got complex but accessible handling, fun rally stages, and loads of motors

BOY RACER!

4 ■ Want to slam the throttle and snap off some powerslides? You want Rallisport Challenge 2

It's been well hardcore at CVG this month. Not because the Nurse finally got her tips out, but because of the harcore games. IndyCar 2005 is a full-on simulation of oval racing and NHL Eastside is a stat-heavy puck fan's dream. And Richard Burns Rally? Put it this way: the developers didn't program it – they chiselled it from a block of granite.

Richard Burns himself guides you through the tutorial, and despite some long loading delays it's actually rewarding. Unlike GT4 Prologue, which felt a bit patronising, RBR actually teaches you something about the tactics real rally drivers use.

And by crikey you'll have to learn. RBR wants to be the ultimate rally simulation. Forget jumping behind the wheel and peeling off powerslides – you must learn how the car handles before you can do any of the exciting stuff.

Driving on snow doesn't feel all that different: every surface bar tarmac is slidey

The six countries are satisfyingly different in look and feel. Here's Oz. Mate

Catastrophic car damage stops your race instantly. Fire is not a good sign

CHEWIN' ON GRAVEL

The effect of this super-hardcore handling is that just getting around a stage is a hell of an achievement. Every bend, no matter how slight, is a challenge that must be met with skill and conviction. Bugger it up and it'll bugger you right back.

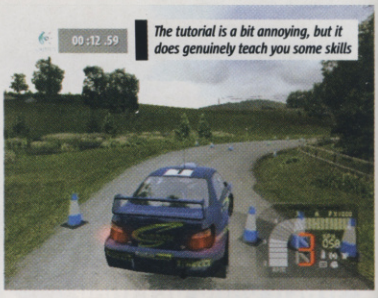
Add to this the truly pant-crapping speed your motor thumps out and you've got a game that snarls at you like a blue-balled Rottweiler. Taming it is a genuinely satisfying experience, but requires serious patience.

Thing is, since we're international playboys here on CVG, we've been rally driving, and it didn't really feel like this. The cars skitter around with a frustrating looseness and never feel as heavy as you would expect. Part of the problem is that it's tough to apply realistic car handling to a joypad; RBR is far more reactive with a force feedback steering wheel.

Crucially, it's not much fun. You end up driving around like a pensioner, terrified to touch the accelerator and messing yourself every time a corner looms.

That's the problem with hardcore games. There's a fantastic rally experience growling under RBR's bonnet, but you have to be a full-on rally fan to tease it out. ✷

Car damage affects your motor in much more drastic ways than most racing games



The tutorial is a bit annoying, but it does genuinely teach you some skills

PREVIOUS GAMES
■ Mace Griffin, Wolverine's Revenge, Rally Championship Extreme

HARD FACTS
- Number of cars: eight
- Number of stages: 38
- Number of countries: six
- Number of tweakable components: 92
- Last time Richard Burns raced: 26 October 2003

DID YOU KNOW?
■ Richard Burns himself is the 2001 WRC Champion and was diagnosed with a brain tumour last November, forcing him to end his season early. He may never rally again. Get well soon, Burnsy!

Visually RBR is cracking, although we've seen better car models in McRae and WRC 3

Your navigator calls out pace notes and you can use 3D markers on the road to help

CVG VERDICT

GRAEME

GRAPHICS 84
Lush, rolling scenery with a sense of space. Car models could do with a polish, though

SOUND 81
Fine as far as it goes, but nowhere near as hyperactive as Rallisport's howls and growls

GAMEPLAY 68
Repetitive rally action further hampered by shockingly steep learning curve

LASTING APPEAL 76
Pump your blood, sweat and tears into RBR's fuel tank for serious long-term satisfaction

Impressively adept sim with hardcore credentials, but not accessible or instantly rewarding enough. Aimed squarely at the most mental rally fans amongst ya.

OVERALL SCORE 72

HOW IT COMPARES
RALLISPORT CHALLENGE 2
RICHARD BURNS RALLY
COLIN MCRAE 04

CUTTING EDGE ACTION.

ONLY ON XBOX

TECMO | 100% GAMES

"Arguably the finest-looking console game ever..." The Mirror

You are the last of your clan. You are driven by vengeance. And you are the most lethal ninja that ever lived. You are Ryu Hayabusa, sworn to destroy the evil Vigor Empire for massacring your kinsmen. No monster, no magic and no masonry will stand in your way. Walk up walls, wield new weapons and wage all-out war in history's most celebrated action game recreated and redefined just for Xbox. With awesome detail, and breakthrough 3-D gameplay, anyone who's ever seen a ninja and lived to tell the tale will agree that no game ever looked this good.

NINJA GAIDEN | XBOX

it's good to play together

www.ninjagaidengame.com

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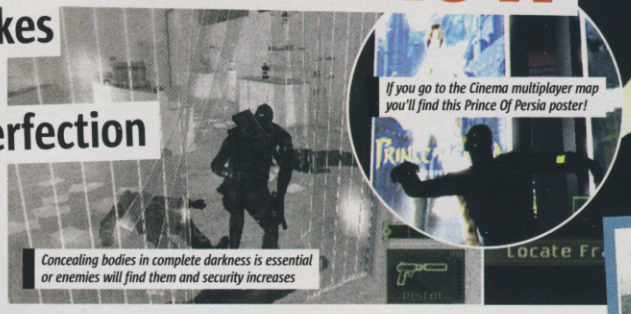
RELEASE DATE	GAME INFO	CONTACT INFO	ONLINE GAMING	EXTRAS
OUT NOW	COST: £39.99 PLAYERS: 1	* PUB: UBISOFT * DEV: UBISOFT * WWW.PANDORATOMORROW.COM * CONTACT: 01932 838 230	* 2-4 PLAYERS * MODES: SABOTAGE, EXTRACTION, NEUTRALIZATION	* USB HEADSET

SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW

Sam Fisher eats snakes for breakfast and poops out stealth perfection

Where there's smoke there's fire... gunfire! Keep your head low and equip those thermal goggles!


Concealing bodies in complete darkness is essential or enemies will find them and security increases

If you go to the Cinema multiplayer map you'll find this Prince Of Persia poster!

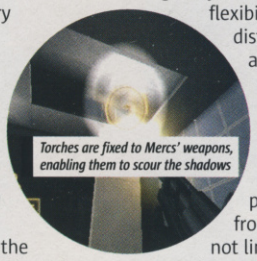
Solid Snake must've messed his stealth suit when he first spied Sam Fisher in the original Splinter Cell. Here's a fella with an even squarer jaw than him, bigger muscles, cooler moves, better kit... plus he doesn't have a mullet!

So we can only imagine that Snake's currently curled up under a rock somewhere, waiting silently for Fisher fever to blow over. See, Pandora Tomorrow has kicked off a storm of excitement across the globe on Xbox. Now it's getting its second wind on PS2, and another hurricane of enthusiasm is brewing. This one's unlikely to die down in a hurry either. With good reason! Pandora Tomorrow is the slickest stealth actioner we've ever played. Fact!

Sam's matured for his latest espionage escapade. He's no longer a raw recruit with only a handful of deadly manoeuvres. He comes to Pandora Tomorrow armed to the teeth with even more killer skills and outrageously smart gizmos. And these extra abilities aren't just gimmicky additions that've been chucked in for show. They're crucial to how you play Pandora Tomorrow, and offer you masses of exciting ways to tackle all the rock-hard scenarios that await you in Ubisoft's arse-quakingly tense stealth thriller.

KILL SKILL

In Metal Gear you have to tap walls with your knuckles to alert guards and draw them towards you. Pandora Tomorrow expands on that idea and gives you much more flexibility for distracting and dealing with guards, because Sam can now whistle. It works wickedly, because you can use it anywhere – out in the open, perched on a ledge, dangling from a pipe or whatever. You're not limited by your surroundings.


Torches are fixed to Mercs' weapons, enabling them to scour the shadows

This means that you can create stacks of unique guard-luring scenarios on the fly. You might be hanging from a cable and want the guard to pass beneath you – whistle him over and then let go of the cable to drop onto him and knock him out! Draw enemies into the shadows, lead them into other areas, muck 'em about! Sam's simple new talent cooks up heaps of fun distraction-style action.

DINGLE-DANGLE-DO

Then there are the moves like the SWAT turn (where you rapidly spin from cover to cover unnoticed) and the sweet dangle-and-shoot manoeuvre! Hang upside-down from pipes, cables and beams and use your silenced pistol in this position. It's one of the slickest-looking moves around. On a little side note, we can't wait for Splinter Cell 3 where you get to pick up enemies by their heads while dangling bat-like and crack their necks.

Then there are all the new gadgets! We love the fact that you can now use your Optic Cable in almost any surveillance situation – threaded under doors, though grates in the floor and gaps in ceilings. Plus it's now equipped with thermal and night vision, both of which are regularly called upon. On the train level one of the blokes you're spying on has a wooden leg, and you

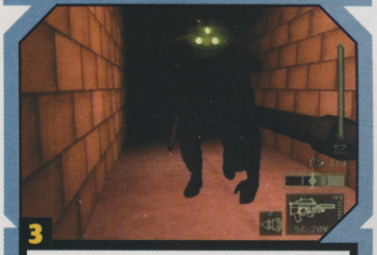
TAKING THE PS2 PATH

Even though all of the missions see you carrying out the same objectives as those in the Xbox version, you have to go about things differently from time to time.

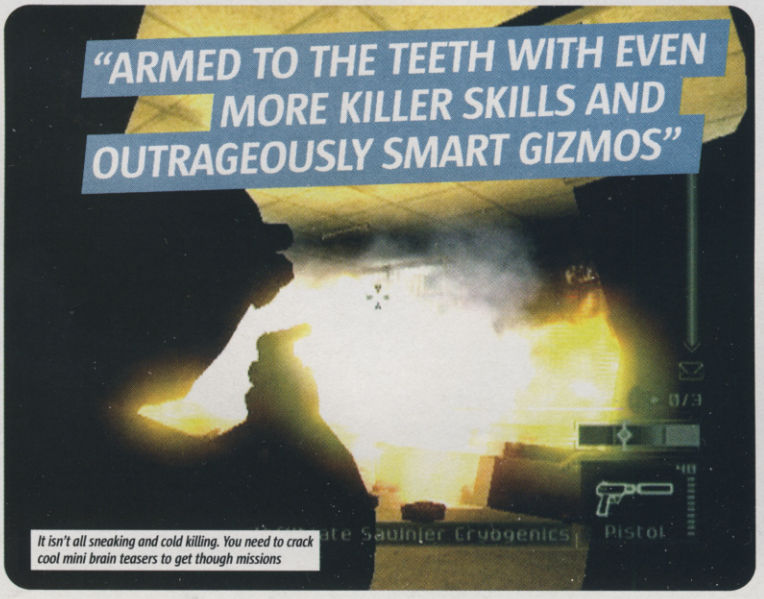
The layout of each level has changed slightly. Plus some extra guards have been chucked in and new routes added, putting you in mildly tougher-to-handle situations.

1 ■ The PS2 version has lobbed in more trapdoors and underground tunnel routes for you to slink through

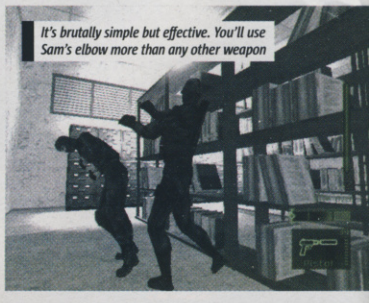
2 ■ Extra surveillance cameras and new traps have also been added to levels, so it's a wee bit trickier

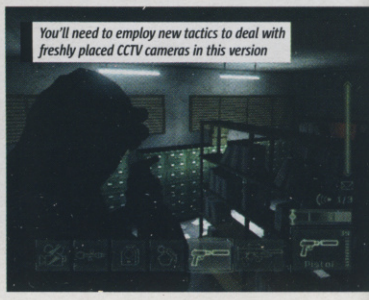

3 ■ There's a few more booby traps too, that need to be cracked the same way as lock-picking

4 ■ Although the levels have been tweaked ever so slightly, the story and missions remain the same



It isn't all sneaking and cold killing. You need to crack cool mini brain teasers to get though missions

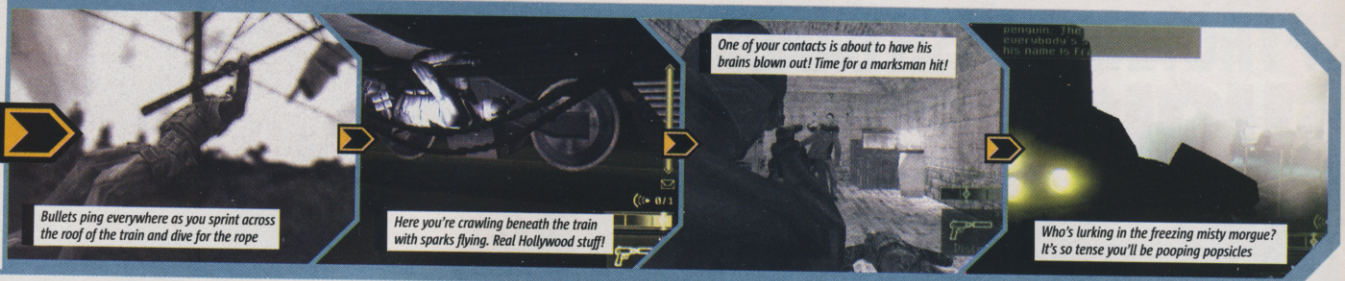

It's brutally simple but effective. You'll use Sam's elbow more than any other weapon


You'll need to employ new tactics to deal with freshly placed CCTV cameras in this version

■ Every mission features at least a couple of awesome blockbuster moments! Like the moment when you're doing

DRAMA KING

a 200-foot zip-line down onto a submarine while guards search the night sky and torch lights criss-cross in front of you!



Bullets ping everywhere as you sprint across the roof of the train and dive for the rope

Here you're crawling beneath the train with sparks flying. Real Hollywood stuff!

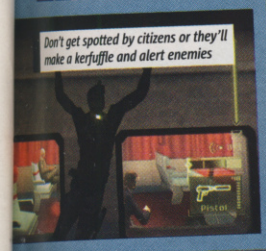
One of your contacts is about to have his brains blown out! Time for a marksman hit!

Who's lurking in the freezing misty morgue? It's so tense you'll be pooping popsicles

"THE SLICKEST STEALTH ACTIONER WE'VE EVER PLAYED!"

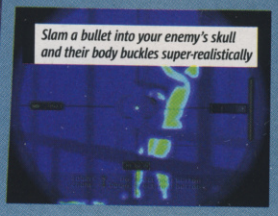
Play a Merc in multiplayer and you get motion sensing and electro-detecting visual options

Splinter Cell invented this smart over-the-shoulder combat style and still nobody does it better

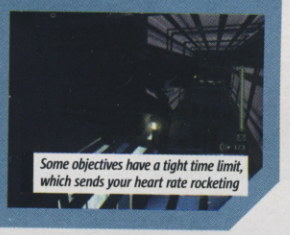


Don't get spotted by citizens or they'll make a kerfuffle and alert enemies

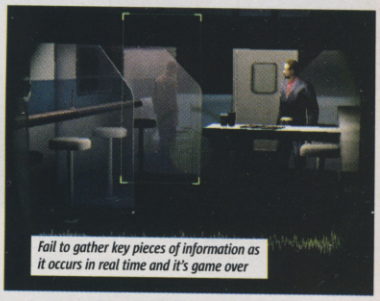
You can't kill and conceal everything that moves. Often a 'no fatalities' rule applies



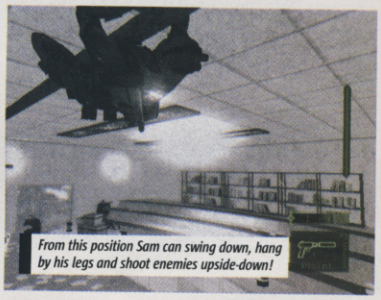
Slam a bullet into your enemy's skull and their body buckles super-realistically



Some objectives have a tight time limit, which sends your heart rate rocketing



Fail to gather key pieces of information as it occurs in real time and it's game over



From this position Sam can swing down, hang by his legs and shoot enemies upside-down!

PREVIOUS GAMES

■ Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell, Rainbow Six, Ghost Recon and Rogue Spear, plus Prince Of Persia, XIII

HARD FACTS

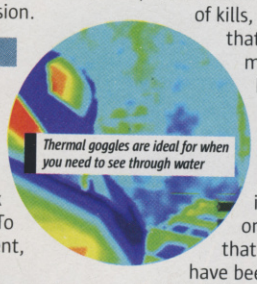
■ Eight massive single-player missions
■ New post-mission stats
■ Sam's boss is voiced by Dennis Haysbert, the actor who plays President Palmer in the TV show 24!

DID YOU KNOW?

■ You can pick up a pair of Xigel 9500 night vision goggles just like Sam Fisher's for about 400 smackers online! Or get a pair of owl eyes transplanted into your head for about the same price.

have to make sure he's the right person by threading the Optic Cable under the door to his cabin on a train, and checking that only one of his legs shows up. There are stacks of class touches like this scattered throughout each mission.

STAT ATTACK



Thermal goggles are ideal for when you need to see through water

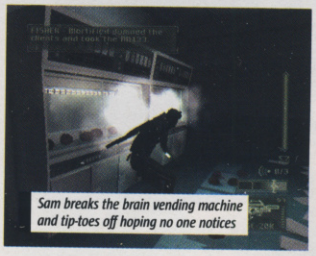
There're some differences between the PS2 and the Xbox versions. We're not going to sugarcoat it; the Xbox version looks better! To get geeky for a moment, the textures aren't as polished and the lighting isn't nearly as dramatic in the PS2 game. That said, it still looks unbelievable and manages to conjure up just as much atmosphere and attitude as its Xbox cousin, because every level is so blindingly detailed and massively interactive.

Plus now whenever you complete a mission in this version, you get a breakdown of your performance. Time taken, number of kills, alarms triggered, that sort of stuff. Not much to rave about, but it does give stealth perfectionists an incentive to replay missions.

The gameplay's identical with the only difference being that the mission maps have been tweaked to offer slightly different routes through a level. Ubisoft has added a few small rooms to various locations, shifted doors and popped in extra ventilation shafts and moved other objects within levels. But to be honest, only hardcore followers of the series would notice these changes.

As for the multiplayer, it's exactly the same as the Xbox version and is guaranteed to become one of the most popular online experiences for PS2.

Solid Snake might as well stay under his rock for the next few years if Sam Fisher keeps this up, because Pandora Tomorrow is utterly indispensable. ✶



Sam breaks the brain vending machine and tip-toes off hoping no one notices

CVG 2ND OPINION

Time to admit that your PS2 isn't quite up to the performance of Xbox, but this doesn't take away from SCPT being essential for Sony's box. You may have noticed how many stealth games are scurrying out of the woodwork, but it's Sam Fisher who still has all the best moves and the scalp-tightening tension to his missions. Oh, and you MUST play this online!

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS — 93
Minus that yummy Xbox gloss, but still the best-looking PS2 game we've seen this year

SOUND — 90
A lot of silence... but when the music and sound effects kick in it's goosebump central

GAMEPLAY — 94
Slick moves, wicked espionage scenarios and top class AI. Stealth done to near perfection

LASTING APPEAL — 93
A good 15 hours of single-player fun. Online multiplayer will hook you in for months

Every bit as bowel-rupturingly tense and terrific as the Xbox version. Sneaking has never been so freaking fantastic. A supreme stealth master!

OVERALL SCORE 93

HOW IT COMPARES
HITMAN: CONTRACTS
SPLINTER CELL: PT
METAL GEAR SOLID 2

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Pandora Tomorrow takes much of the action outdoors and forces you to test your stealth skills in unpredictable playing fields.

It no longer feels like you're just skulking through corridors. Each outside environment is crammed with detailed objects and scenery that you can utilise to conceal yourself – including natural features like trees, rivers and tall grass.

■ Drag your hostage into the water and interrogate him under the bridge out of view

■ There aren't nearly as many shadows to slink into outside. This calls for more guile

■ You can shoot out street lamps to create a cosy dark hiding place, just like indoors

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

GAME INFO: COST: £29.99 PLAYERS: 1-4

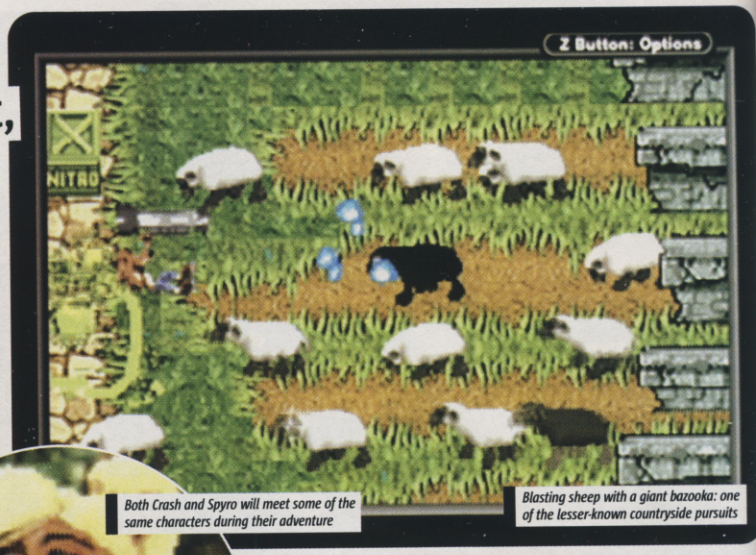
CONTACT INFO:
- PUB: VIVENDI
- DEV: VICARIOUS VISIONS
- WWW.VUGAMES.COM
- CONTACT: 01189 209 111

SPYRO AND CRASH BANDICOOT FUSION

Crouching bandicoot, purple dragon

It's Crash business as usual. He runs, jumps, breaks crates and collects fruit

Spyro's purple ass lands plum in the middle of yet another spike. Get used to this



Blasting sheep with a giant bazooka: one of the lesser-known countryside pursuits

All the best things in life come in pairs: boobs, balls, legs, eyes, ears, twins, bandicoots and dragons. Yes, you read that right, old purple scales Spyro and crazy legs (and arms) Crash are getting together for some double team action.

Two separate games on two separate carts linked by a common storyline, similar gameplay, and trading cards that can be swapped between games. You'll have to buy both games separately of course, which cynics might say smells like cashing in on two beloved gaming heroes, but Spyro's too blissed out to care and Crash is too stupid, so let's forget about cold cash and focus on the fun factor.

Neo Cortex and Ripto, the heinous, deeply evil arch nemeses of Crash and Spyro, have teamed up and are planning to take over the universe. Again. Crash and Spyro set out on individual quests to stop the invasion. Rumour has it that they may eventually meet up in each other's game, but we wouldn't want to spoil the surprise! What we do know for sure is that the gameplay emphasis is placed firmly on completing five mini-games per level in order to open the portal to the next stage. In between there's all the usual 2D platform-hopping action we've come to expect from Crash and Spyro. It's all pretty simple. Crash collects Wumpa fruit, Spyro collects crystals, and they both jump over lots of spikes. ✶

Both Crash and Spyro will meet some of the same characters during their adventure

MAURA

CVG VERDICT

Standard platforming action with old-skool treats for mini-games. You can't help feeling that an interesting concept has been somewhat underused.

OVERALL SCORE **68**

HOW IT COMPARES
- MARIO & LUIGI SUPERSTAR SAGA
- CRASH/SPYRO: FUSION
- WARIO WORLD

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

GAME INFO: COST: £39.99 PLAYERS: 1-4

CONTACT INFO:
- PUB: ACTIVISION
- DEV: LUXOFLUX
- WWW.SHREK2THEGAME.COM
- CONTACT: 01753 756100

NINTENDO GAMECUBE | GAME BOY ADVANCE | XBOX | PC CD ROM

SHREK 2

Big, green, and coming to a console near you

The cutscenes look like they've been lifted straight out of the movie

Let's be honest, licensed games frequently stink, and games based on animated features are usually the worst of the smelly pile. Shrek 2 the movie is by all accounts a bit of a classic, and for once the game actually manages to capture some of the humour, charm and wit of the big-screen version.

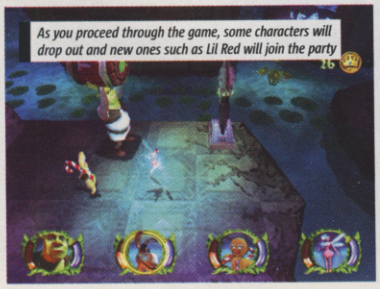
The story closely follows that of the film, although there are some locations that are unique to the game. The action kicks off in Shrek's swamp, as he and his bride are embarking on a journey to visit her parents in the land of Far Far Away. The first task sets the tone for the rest of the game: Shrek has to collect bouncing eyeballs from the swamp to sustain him on his journey. Nice!

The gameplay sticks firmly to traditional puzzle-solving and platforming. You get to collect stuff, fight in brawls with the likes of Robin Hood and his Merry Men, and figure out how to open the gates to the next section. You play as part of a squad of four interchangeable characters, including the Ninja hero Gingerbread Man, wise ass (literally) Donkey, Princess Fiona and assorted other fairytale characters. Each character has a special trait which can be used to help you solve puzzles.

It's certainly not the greatest platform adventure ever, but it's imbued with the same charming humour as the film, with all manner of sight gags that tip a knowing wink to fans of the movie. ✶

You don't have to finish all the tasks in an area before you can move on to the next location

Rooney congratulated Keown on his solid defending


As you proceed through the game, some characters will drop out and new ones such as Lil Red will join the party

Gingerbread Man has to be the coolest character. He even gets to throw cookies

MAURA

CVG VERDICT

After a few hours veteran gamers will be crying out for something more challenging. Younger players will love the humour and cute characters, though.

OVERALL SCORE **69**

HOW IT COMPARES
- ENTER THE MATRIX
- SHREK 2
- SCOOBY-DOO! MYSTERY MAYHEM

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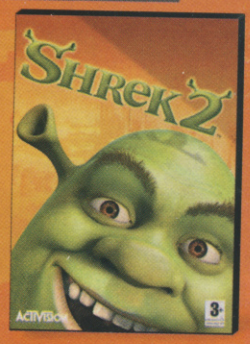

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RELEASE DATE: NOW

GAME INFO: COST: £39.99 PLAYERS: 1

CONTACT INFO:
- PUB: EIDOS
- DEV: GUERRILLA
- WWW.SHELLSHOCK.COM
- CONTACT:020 8636 3000

SHELLSHOCK NAM '67

There's a rumble in the jungle – must be the carpet bombing

Uncle Sam's top secret burrowing helicopter wasn't a complete success

Much of the fighting is at pretty close range in Shellshock. Which is a good thing as the draw distance is pretty feeble

Those VC are an ingenious lot. Blow their tree houses apart!

You're crawling through a dense jungle in the dead of night. Somewhere out there is a pit of sharpened bamboo stakes, smeared with crap so that if the wound doesn't get you when you fall in, the infection will.

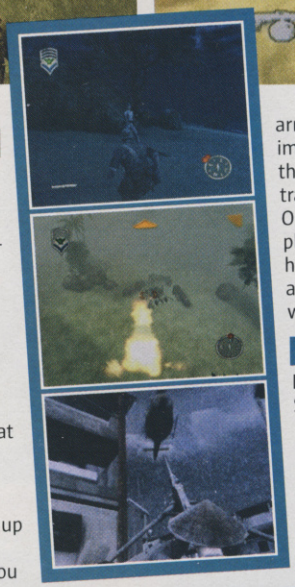
Should you survive and get captured, you can look forward to three years living in a bamboo cage, eating rat meat and talking to cockroaches to stay sane. Those goddamn pinko commies – they're an evil bunch of sonvabitches.

But then they've got every right to fight dirty. After all, Uncle Sam dropped more bombs on them than were dropped in World War II, sprayed 'em with chemical defoliants, and kicked women and children out of their villages before burning them down – or sometimes the other way round.

FIGHT THE FLAB!

Yup, Vietnam was a nasty war alright, and that's exactly what Shellshock Nam '67 tries to recreate – the brutal, vicious side of the only war the Yanks have ever lost (apart from the war on obesity – they're a right bunch of lard-asses over there). In fact, they've gone so far down this bloody road, that Shellshock gets an 18 certificate, though it's hardly deserved.

As a raw recruit called up to prevent communism spreading through Asia, you arrive in the Nam and are immediately shipped out to the front. No obligatory training level, thank God. Once in the bush, things play out in third-person, and holding L1 lets you zoom in a little, depending on what weapon you're holding.



FIRST CONTACT

Despite the viewpoint, Shellshock plays like a first-person shooter. And it can't wait to throw you head-first into the meat grinder. The first level sees you patrolling through a sparse jungle, looking to hook up with a squad

WAR GORE

When slugs hit flesh in Shellshock, often the results aint pretty. Heads go 'Pop!', limbs come flying off, and gurgling death rattles cry out from ruptured throats.

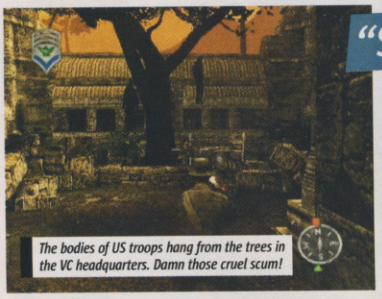
But actually it's all a little lame. You hardly notice any of it, and when you've got a heavy machine gun, practically everyone you shoot goes down decapitated.

1 ■ CRACK! An accurate hit to a VC's left arm takes it flying off. Ooh, the excitement. Ooh, the horror of war

2 ■ The grisly evidence is for all to see in the aftermath of a battle. Limbs and heads all over the shop

3 ■ A direct hit from your grenade separates all this VC's major extremities from his torso. Bet that stings

4 ■ Once you lay your hands on the M60, Charlies' heads will be flying around like ninepins



The bodies of US troops hang from the trees in the VC headquarters. Damn those cruel scum!

Like most shooters these days, you've got to use cover for your advantage to stay alive in the jungle

"SHELLSHOCK PLAYS LIKE AN FPS, AND CAN'T WAIT TO THROW YOU INTO THE MEAT GRINDER"

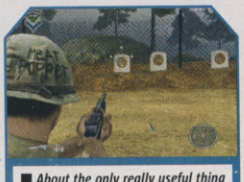
Attacking these fortified bunkers is a cool – if extremely hard – early level

ACE OF BASE

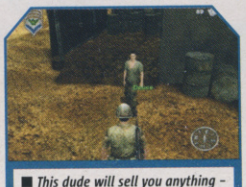
Between missions you get time to kick back and take some R&R at base camp. Here you can practise with weapons, or just bum around chatting with the lads and trying to get some action with the ladies.

Use Tokens earnt from finding special stuff in the missions to pay for this good stuff. You'll spend ages 'getting blunted and bagging beeatches'. At least that's what Steve claimed when his review was late.

■ Here's what home base looks like. Well defended, and serviced by a veritable army of whores



■ About the only really useful thing you can do here is practise with new weapons on the firing range



■ This dude will sell you anything – well, he'll sell you drugs to get off your box with, anyway

IT'S LAYDEEZ NITE

A major part of the Vietnam experience for the average US trooper (if you believe the films), was getting some serious poontang.

Shellshock faithfully simulates this important aspect of the war in a way that we can respect and learn from (yeah, right). All the bedroom action happens back at base, where eveyone's on the lookout for a taste of the boom-boom.

1 ■ *The hospital's ace for chatting up home-grown skirt. "Hello, do you know Nurse CVG? You're her mum? Oh"*

2 ■ *This is Mama-San, and for the price of a few tokens, she'll introduce you to one of her girls*

3 ■ *Oh yeah baby! You love me long time? Who can blame a soldier for getting jiggy with this kinda booty?*

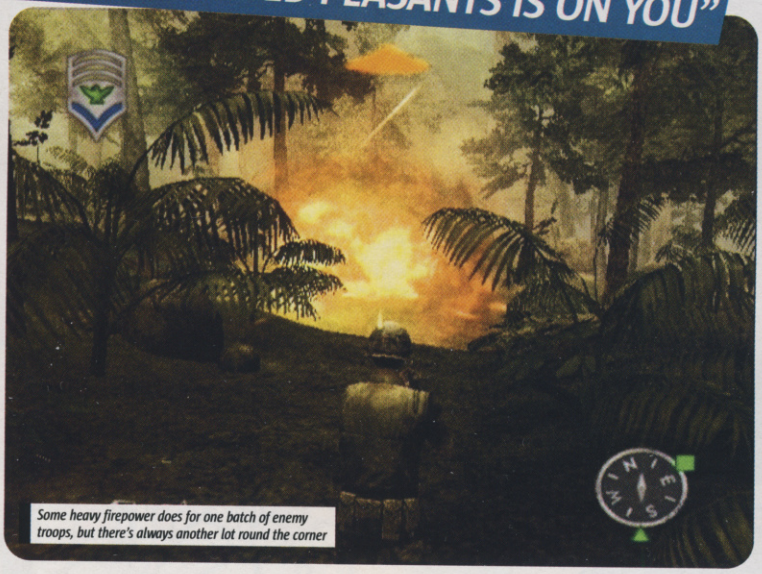
Some of the FMVs are pretty damn good – better than the rest of the visuals, at least

The badge in the top left shows how much health you've got left. It partially regenerates over time

STENCH TRENCH!

The scene after a particularly nasty firefight can be one of severe carnage. Check out this trench full of communist corpses.

"JUST AS YOU BEAT OFF ONE WAVE, ANOTHER SWARM OF HIGHLY INDOCTRINATED PEASANTS IS ON YOU"



Some heavy firepower does for one batch of enemy troops, but there's always another lot round the corner

that's come under fire. Before you know it, swarms of screaming VC are pouring out of the undergrowth, popping caps and screaming (in English, helpfully). There's no time to learn, there's no time to adjust. You've simply got to start shooting. And once you've started, it doesn't stop.

CANNON FODDER

Just as you've cleaned out one machine-gun nest, another enemy squad turns up, AKs spitting hot lead. No sooner have you beaten off one wave of screaming assailants, than another mass of highly-indoctrinated peasants swarm at you, firing wildly and lobbing lead pineapples.

You'll personally account for several villages worth of guerrilla fighters over the course of the game's ten missions. It's not a sophisticated approach to gaming, maybe, but it blows boredom away in a hail of bullets.

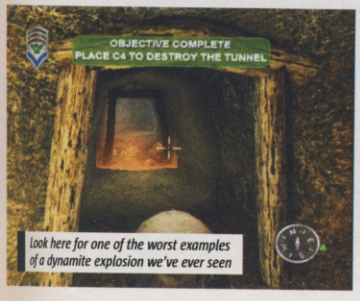
Assuming you've got any left, that is. Y'see, in the thick jungles of the Nam, you only get to lug around one main weapon at any time, as well as your pistol and grenades. That tell-tale click of the empty chamber becomes a familiar sound, so you must learn to scour the bodies of fallen commies for a replacement weapon.

Luckily you've also got some back-up firepower. For most missions, you are a part of a squad and, though you can't control them, you do need to stick with them to complete your objectives. Only thing is, they're pretty damn useless, leaving you to do most of the dirty work. They'll be like 'search the village' and then they'll all sit down and leave you to root through all those pig pens on your lonesome, the lazy-ass dorks.

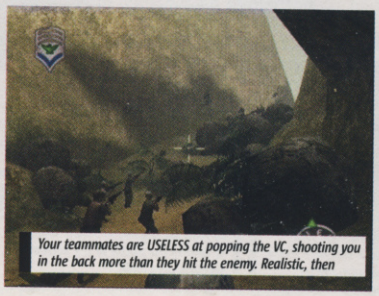
To liven missions up, Guerilla has thrown in a series of unforeseen developments and changes in the original plan. Erroneous artillery bombardments, enemy ambushes and deadly air strikes – these pre-prepared events give the feel of a proper battle. Sure, they're all tightly scripted, but at least first time round they take you by surprise.

BLACK OPS

Breaking up the non-stop carnage are a smattering of stealth missions – infiltrating a base or killing an enemy commander, that kind of thing. If you hate having to skulk around not blowing shit up, don't »



Look here for one of the worst examples of a dynamite explosion we've ever seen



Your teammates are USELESS at popping the VC, shooting you in the back more than they hit the enemy. Realistic, then

An amazing amount of pointy Chinese hats appear in this game

HORRORS OF WAR

War, what is it good for? Making videogames based on it, that's what.

But in an effort to point out that real war is pretty much a bag of balls whichever way you look at it, Shellshock doesn't shy away from showing the grim underbelly of what the Nam was like. But then when you're playing a game, it all just feels like a bit of fun, really.

1 ■ *A friendly platoon is (er, was) under that artillery bombardment your squad just called in. Ooops*

2 ■ *Cornered, this VC officer refuses to be captured by the capitalist scum, and blows his head off instead*

3 ■ *Take a moment to consider the human cost of war. Then head out for some more mass slaughter*

4 ■ *Once the battle is won, the Vietcong corpses get piled up for burning. Anyone for BBQ ribs?*

■ You only get to carry one main weapon at a time in Shellshock, but you can nick any you find lying around. There are loads of

SHOOTING GALLERY

period shooters from both sides to use , but our main gripe is that so many of them feel pretty similar to each other to use.

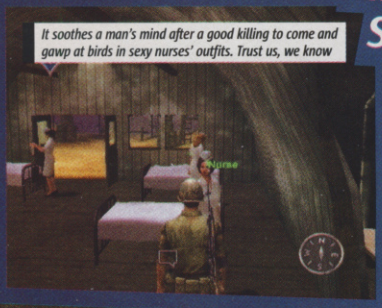
The AK 47 – for when you absolutely, positively need to kill every single VC in the clearing

The standard issue M16 also packs a punch, but you'll run out of ammo quick

These sub machine-guns are awesome 'cos they carry so much ammo

As you'd expect in a game like this, you can also get behind some heavy weapons

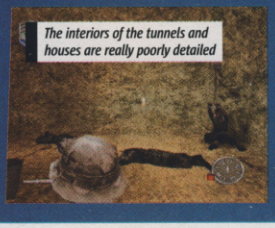
"IF YOU HATE SKULKING, YOU CAN SOD THE SNEAKAGE AND WADE IN TERMINATOR STYLE"



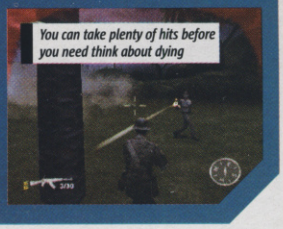
It soothes a man's mind after a good killing to come and gawp at birds in sexy nurses' outfits. Trust us, we know

Even in the stealth levels it doesn't matter if you're spotted, so you can always resort to brute force

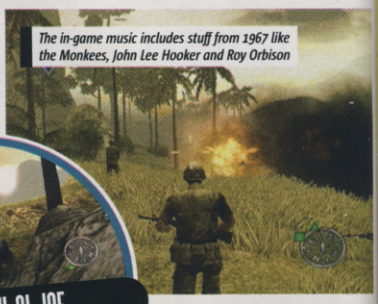
If you head off course even a little you'll get called a deserter and booted off the mission



The interiors of the tunnels and houses are really poorly detailed



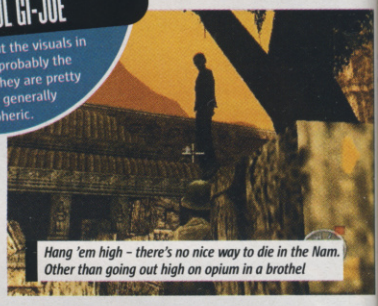
You can take plenty of hits before you need think about dying



The in-game music includes stuff from 1967 like the Monkees, John Lee Hooker and Roy Orbison

VIEWTIFUL GI-JOE

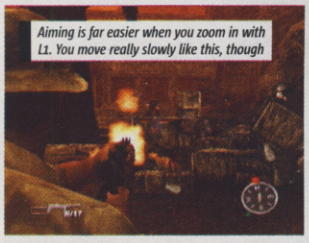
The best bits about the visuals in Shellshock are probably the environments. They are pretty varied, and generally atmospheric.



Hang 'em high – there's no nice way to die in the Nam. Other than going out high on opium in a brothel

worry, you don't have to bother with the cloak and dagger stuff if you don't want to. You can always sod the sneakage, and wade in Terminator-style.

If it weren't for one thing, Shellshock would be almost indistinguishable from the rest of the Medal Of Honors and Call Of Dutys out there. That being the way it wants to show the messed-up, men-with-big-guns-gone-mad nature of the Vietnam War. Like films such as Platoon, Casualties Of War and Full Metal Jacket, Shellshock has scenes of drug taking, prostitute shagging, civilian killing and mutilation.



Aiming is far easier when you zoom in with L1. You move really slowly like this, though

PREVIOUS GAMES

■ This lot only formed in 2000, so this is their first game. Killzone is next

HARD FACTS

■ There are ten levels to play through, though once you finish you can play again in Psychaedelic mode

DID YOU KNOW?

■ Around 58,000 Americans died in Vietnam, compared with more than two million Vietnamese. And it turned out to have been a total waste of time, life, money and energy as in 1975 the Communists finally conquered Saigon and won the war anyway

ROUGHLY SPEAKING

So are they trying to make a moral point, or what? If they are, they fail, because unlike the scenes in the anti-war films, doing bad stuff in a game is fun! Never here do you feel shocked or horrified. We're used to alarming levels of ultra-violence thanks to games like Soldier Of Fortune and Manhunt. The wanton carnage and bad behaviour just ends up seeming like a piss-take – GTA Ho Chi Minh City.

You come off feeliing the controversy angle is a bit of a cheap trick because much of Shellshock is a little rough round the edges. The environments, while nicely varied, are a little drab and lacking detail. The AI of your squad mates and the enemy is pretty lamentable, with both happy to scuttle around in the open in full view of enemy guns. Animations aren't the best either, though some of the death throes are pretty cool, with soldiers going down clutching or minus various body parts. A heavy reliance on scripting, the fact you can see bugger all distance and slightly clunky feeling controls all mean it's far from state of the art too.

But this doesn't mean it ain't fun. Shellshock's saving grace – apart from the fact it's set in Nam – is that the action hardly lets up. This is no sophisticated team-based effort, it's not even a realistic exposé of the shameful horrors of the Vietnam War. It's just an out-and-out blast 'em up, which is nothing to be ashamed of. ✷

CVG 2ND OPINION

I was expecting something special from Shellshock. It's got cool, gritty visuals and is packed with great ideas – relentless VC-fragging action, gruesome deaths and a neat storyline. Problem is, the controls are too twitchy and ultimately it's a totally shallow experience. Let's hope Guerrilla's other upcoming biggie, Killzone, doesn't suffer the same fate.

CVG VERDICT

STEVE O

GRAPHICS

Varied environments marred by dodgy animations and limited sight range

SOUND

The music is great, but many of the speech and gun samples are poor

GAMEPLAY

There's nothing much new, but at least it's action packed

LASTING APPEAL

There's no multiplayer to interest you once the single player's over

Apart from its lame attempts to be controversial and 'realistic', Shellshock is just another wartime blaster. Good fun, but rough round the edges

OVERALL SCORE 71

HOW IT COMPARES

CALL OF DUTY
SHELLSHOCK
MOH RISING SUN

BOOBY PRIZE

If it wasn't enough to be on the look-out for ambushes, air strikes, artillery bombardments and minefields, Charlie likes to keep you on your toes with a nice selection of booby traps.

Usually either a grenade on a wire or a pit full of pointy sticks, these bad boys are a pain in the backside. Learning to disarm them will become one of your main priorities once in-country.

■ This is what awaits the unwary soldier – a pit full of sharpened bamboo stakes. Not good

■ To disarm a booby trap, first you've got to find it and then creep up to it with your wire cutters

■ Then it's the not-so-simple matter of solving the puzzle at the bottom within a time limit

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RELEASE DATE	GAME INFO	CONTACT INFO	ONLINE GAMING
NOW	COST: £39.99 PLAYERS: 1-16	* PUB: ATARI * DEV: ZOMBIE STUDIOS * HTTP://WWW.ATARI.COM/SHADOWOPS/ * CONTACT: 020 8222 9700	* UP TO 16 PLAYERS ONLINE * XBOX LIVE * USB HEADSET

SHADOW OPS: RED MERCURY

Shudder at the horrors of war with Atari's military FPS – for all the wrong reasons

Call us crazy, but a missile in the muzzle ain't gonna look pretty

The seeping mist cranks the atmosphere right up as you cross the vast ravine

Enemies are all over you like a bad rash so sneaking around's a good idea

If all games were designed like Shadow Ops, reviewing would be a piece of cake – play for ten minutes, reeling as every single instance of horrible gameplay implementation is introduced in the first level, then sit in a corner trash-talking over Pro Evo for the rest of the afternoon.

Of course, we'd be doing you all a major disservice if we left it at that so, wily investigators of truth and justice that we are, we've slogged on further into the game to see if, like a poo, the middle and end stink as bad as the turtle's head.

SMACK IN THE CHOPS

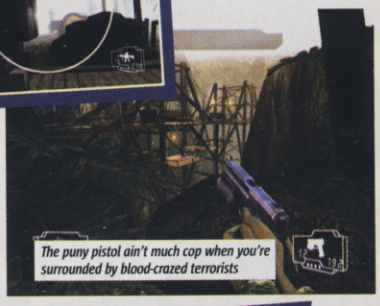
Scripted by a team of Hollywood writers, Shadow Ops cribs a scene straight out of Black Hawk Down for the start of its unadventurous first-person military shoot 'em up antics. No sooner do you leap from your chopper into the desolate Middle Eastern war zone, than it smacks into a building and crash-lands in the distance. The minute you touch the ground, dozens of frenzied enemies home in on you faster than flies to a hippo's butt. Then, practically instantaneously, you'll be a bleeding stump of bullet fodder.

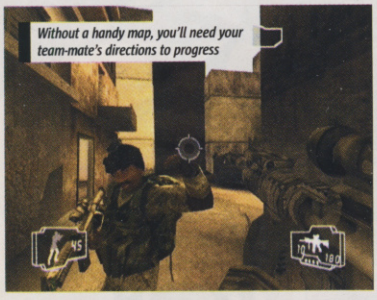
Persevere though and you'll eventually start to make progress – mainly 'cos events are scripted to the point where enemies seem to behave almost identically each time you play. Throughout the game, success often depends more on memory than skill, leaving Shadow Ops feeling more like a bizarre on-rails shooter than a proper FPS.

HOT SHOT HELL

This wouldn't be so bad if the enemy AI didn't seem to cheat so much – under cover or not, they can spot you a mile off. Invariably, the second you steam into a new area, enemies spawn and lock their super-human sights on your forehead, turning you into a human sieve before your brain's even managed to engage your thumb.

Now might be a good place to mention the painful loading times because, trust us, you'll become all too familiar with them. Even worse, health-refills are such a rarity that you'll constantly, and laboriously, backtrack across entire levels before you've got the guts to progress. Combine the relentless sudden deaths and long-load

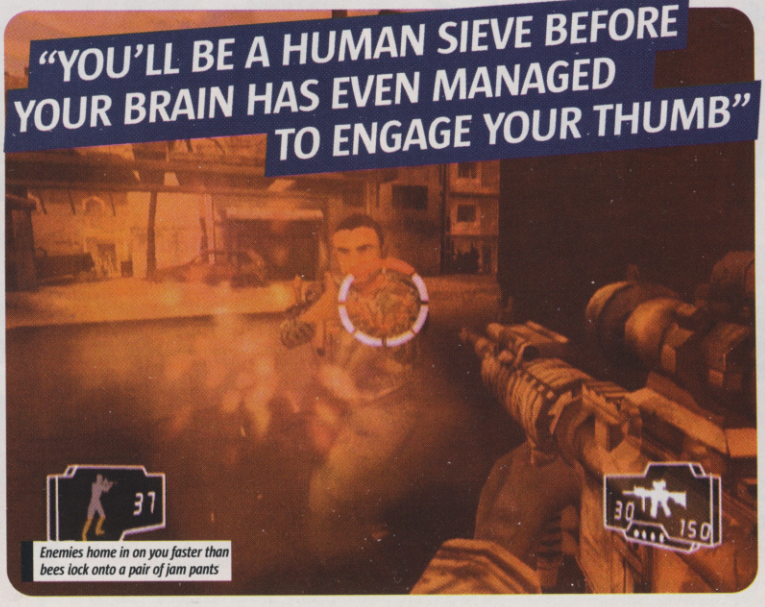

The puny pistol ain't much cop when you're surrounded by blood-crazed terrorists


Without a handy map, you'll need your team-mate's directions to progress

Get your foes in the flames and they'll be running about like crispy fritters

Vertigo and the jungle don't mix – luckily you'll be too occupied by bullets to look down

"YOU'LL BE A HUMAN SIEVE BEFORE YOUR BRAIN HAS EVEN MANAGED TO ENGAGE YOUR THUMB"


Enemies home in on you faster than bees lock onto a pair of jam pants

FRIENDLY FIRE

Maybe it's genius. Get everyone equally frustrated in one-player then give them the chance to take it out on each other in some fairly unexceptional multiplayer mayhem.

Offline, 1-4 players can battle it out using either split-screen or LAN while Live supports two teams of up to 16 players across the four available gameplay modes.

DEATHMATCH

1 ■ *Go it alone in a fight for solo survive – you know the score, boiling bloodlust is best for success*

TEAM DEATHMATCH

2 ■ *Team Deathmatch provides plenty of opportunity for social slaughter – group up then bump off*

CAPTURE THE FLAG

3 ■ *Okay, it's only a flag but, hell, these things are in demand. Get your opponent's back to base for victory*

V.I.P. ESCORT

4 ■ *Do your best bodyguard impression. All together now, "liiiiaaaiiiiaaa will always luuuuurve yeewww..."*

■ Linear level design can feel restrictive at times, but it allows greater control over the unfolding storyline. Consequently,

STRAIGHT AND NARROW

you'll witness plenty of cool scripted moments that'll keep you on your toes and sucked into the unfolding plot.

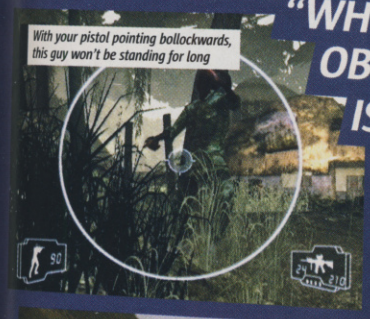
As you land in enemy territory, your ride gets a missile up its tailpipe and hurtles into the unknown

You'll stumble into the wreckage soon enough but only a tangle of twisted torsos remains

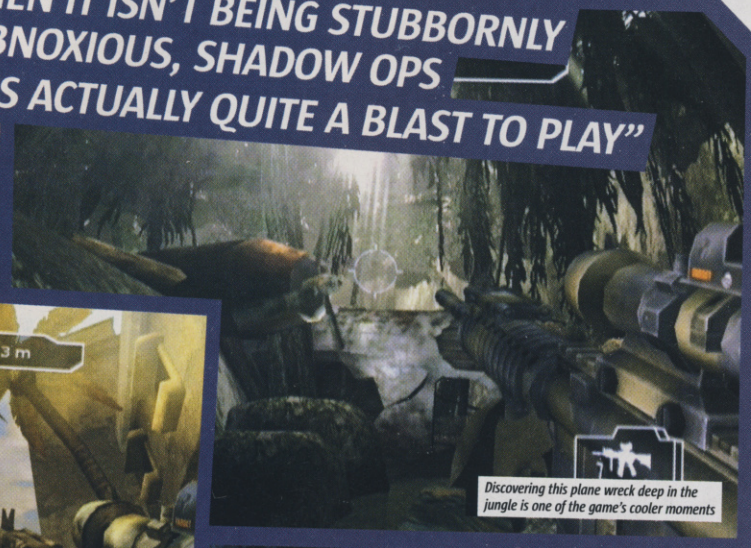
Before you can reach that rocket-toting loon, you'll need to show this tank some manners

You're left all alone when your terrorist target rains missile death on your mate's arse

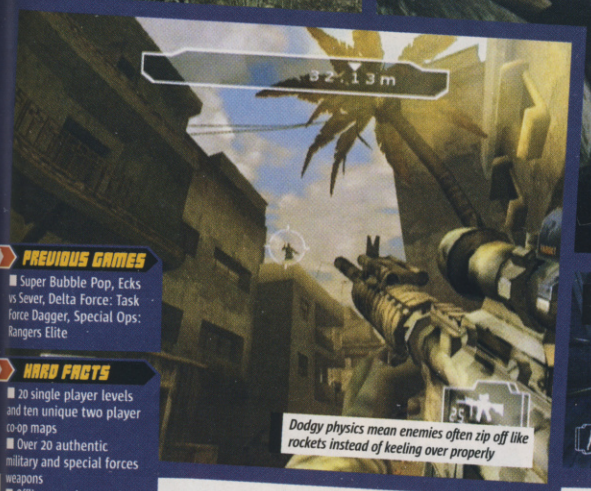
"WHEN IT ISN'T BEING STUBBORNLY OBNOXIOUS, SHADOW OPS IS ACTUALLY QUITE A BLAST TO PLAY"



With your pistol pointing bollockwards, this guy won't be standing for long

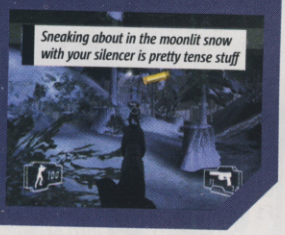


Discovering this plane wreck deep in the jungle is one of the game's cooler moments



Dodgy physics mean enemies often zip off like rockets instead of keeling over properly

Objectives are yawn-inducing familiar – destroy radio communications, anyone?



Sneaking about in the moonlit snow with your silencer is pretty tense stuff

Whacking some explosives down the base of this bridge makes for some impressive fireworks

Flash bombs make the screen go blurry in this groovy little visual effect

PREVIOUS GAMES

■ Super Bubble Pop, Ecks vs Sever, Delta Force: Task Force Dagger, Special Ops: Rangers Elite

HARD FACTS

■ 20 single player levels and ten unique two player co-op maps

■ Over 20 authentic military and special forces weapons

■ Offline 1-4 player split screen or LAN Deathmatch, Team Deathmatch, Capture the Flag and VIP Escort modes and online support for up to 16 players with Xbox Live

DID YOU KNOW?

■ Red Mercury is based on a supposedly real Russian developed nuclear device that's as powerful as Hiroshima but fits into a suitcase. So, no commie alien invasion. Damn. We wanted to tell you how the planet Mercury looks like a giant Rich Tea. But that'd be taking the biscuit. Sorry

restarts with the return-journeys and detonating a 'nade up your own butt suddenly seems like an appealing alternative.

Amazingly though, once you start to become accustomed to the game's frustratingly unbalanced set-up, you might actually start to enjoy yourself – for a while at least. The insane difficulty and ferociously unfair AI becomes less of a nightmare and more of an acceptable challenge once you start to get your head round it – and with the frenzied arcade action pulled down a notch or two, the stunning presentation is actually far easier to appreciate.

EAR ME OUT

The stunning sound design is all courtesy of Hollywood sound studio, Soundelux. With past credits including Black Hawk Down, it's no wonder.

SPIT AND POLISH

Wielding the Unreal 2 engine, Shadow Ops occasionally gives Louise Redknapp a run for her money on the stunner front – the jungle levels are dead impressive, with thick grass bending in the breeze, trees casting moving shadows down onto the rocks below and thick fog slowly spreading along ravines. Chuck in the sonic equivalent of waking up with your own breasts to fondle and the atmosphere will suck you in faster than a cheap ho down Soho.

When it isn't being stubbornly obnoxious, Shadow Ops is actually quite a blast to play – it's tough, engaging and atmospheric. Trouble is, once you hit one of it's all-too-frequent pockets of pure frustration, you'll be back to cursing it all over again.

The competent multi-player modes are enjoyable enough too – but a far cry from the online mayhem of SOCOM II etc. Worth picking up if you're a major military shooter fan and you've exhausted the other games out there. ✷

Usually, your team-mates are about as useful as a condom-shaped muffin in a ho house

CVG 2ND OPINION

Loads has been lavished on making it look and sound like the ultimate military FPS, it's a shame the gameplay doesn't match up too. It's not an awful game, but frequent irritations spoil the enjoyment. If you're well into war games, you might overlook this to enjoy the atmospheric ultra-slick presentation, but there are better shooters out there.

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS 84
Lush, detailed environments that look downright wicked at times

SOUND 89
Impressive effects, voices and music really pump up the atmosphere

GAMEPLAY 64
Entertaining in parts but frustrating enough to ruin any real enjoyment

LASTING APPEAL 76
Multi-player modes are still fun once you tire of the solo missions

OVERALL SCORE 67

When it all comes together, it's a fun and frantic – if uninspired – arcade romp. But while multiplayer is engaging, overall it's nothing new or standout.

HOW IT COMPARES
SOCOM II
SHADOW OPS: RED MERCURY
RAINBOW SIX 3

DEJA VIEWS

One of the most disappointing things about Shadow Ops is its insistence on sticking to tried-and-tested genre clichés throughout its missions.

Sure, there are only so many war-torn terrorist countries in the world, but you'll be crying sour tears of recognition once you've kicked enemy ass across the Middle East, Congo and Russia – yet again. C'mon developers, let's see a war game set in Corby.

■ Your Middle Eastern kick-off comes complete with sweat-inducing lens flare effect and warbly music

■ The jungle level fares better, with some clever action set-pieces and some lush environments to ogle

■ How many times do we really need to infiltrate a secret Russian nuclear base in a videogame, eh?

RELEASE DATE
16 JULY

GAME INFO
COST: £39.99
PLAYERS: 1-2

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: SONY
- DEV: SCE STUDIO LIVERPOOL
- UK.PLAYSTATION.COM
- CONTACT: 020 7859 5000

ONLINE GAMING
- ONLINE TIME TRIALS
- DOWNLOADABLE GHOST CARS

FORMULA ONE 2004

An F1 licence to print money – and not much else

You simply don't feel like you're controlling your racer – it's more like you're steering the scenery

Nope, we really are doing 90 down the track with one wheel missing. Realism? Pah!

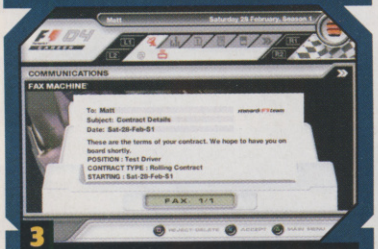
CAREER SMEAR

Career mode looks promising with all the stats, graphs and options a boy racer could want.

Trouble is, the car handling's off and race conditions are so strict, simply qualifying to drive is migraine-inducing. Most frustratingly, you're forced to sit through all sorts of uselessness – like irrelevant emails and inexplicable loading times – meaning you'll spend more time staring at menus than actually doing any driving.

1 ■ *Hopefully, you'll be so mesmerised by all these numbers, you won't notice how little fun you're having*

2 ■ *It's a long, lonely road to the top – and one you'll be travelling a lot thanks to the dodgy vehicle handling*



3 ■ *Inexplicably, no matter how shite you are on the track, you'll still get offered a contract after a few goes*

4 ■ *Our first Championship race and, boy, do things hot up from here on in. Nah, just kidding – it's lukewarm*

Driving fans have had plenty of reasons to grip their gearsticks in a frenzy of engine-roaring rampage over the last few months, with TOCA 2's manic motoring mayhem and the nerve-shredding thrills of RalliSport Challenge 2.

So far though, F1 enthusiasts have been short-changed when it comes to wheel-screeching racing on a home console. We were dead excited then to get our hands on Sony's latest spin on the sport. Flicking through the wealth of options on offer got us itching to slap on a helmet too – every car, driver, team and track that you'd expect to find in a fully licensed F1 game is present and correct.

Leaping straight into Arcade mode to test-drive the racing engine immediately waved warning flags, though. Just getting your vehicle edging into action takes some serious jamming on the accelerator button and mashing it down over an entire race makes steering feel uncomfortable, unnatural and unresponsive. The awkward handling's compounded by the way the game keeps your racer bolted to the centre of the screen like it's made of lead, giving you the impression that you're actually steering the scenery instead of controlling the car.

PREVIOUS GAMES
- Formula One 2001, 2002 and 2003, WipEout Fusion

HARD FACTS
- Simulation, Arcade and Career modes
- Ten official teams
- 20 drivers
- 18 races across four continents and 16 countries

DID YOU KNOW?
- The fuel used to power F1 racing cars is almost identical to the unleaded you'll find in your local petrol station. It's unlikely you'll get your average Nissan Sunny doing 270mph down to Tesco's, though.

IT'S THE PITS

With flaws like these, errors such as a camera so low it's impossible to anticipate the bends ahead seems almost irrelevant – but hey, they're still there. Chuck in a pretty pedestrian sense of speed, and we were shaking our heads when we should have been slaloming round chicanes.

Simulation mode isn't much better. Any nod towards realism is lost with the competition sticking to the racing line like your sweaty arse to leather on a hot day – races frequently feel more like you're riding through rush hour traffic than piloting a cutting-edge piece of auto-engineering. Not to mention that the handling doesn't feel much different from Arcade either.

Things chug along so slowly in multiplayer, it's like driving an ice-cream van round the track

Want more? The damage engine doesn't reflect the fragile nature of an F1 car – a 200mph smash into a wall knocks your front wheels off, while in IndyCar (see p92) your mangled wreck flies 50ft through the air and cartwheels down the track. Forget multiplayer too, unless you want slowdown so bad it feels like you'd have more luck jumping out of your vehicle and running round the track to the finish line.

If you're serious about F1 and wanted a decent simulation, then IndyCar's hardcore authenticity, handling, sense of speed and technical accuracy mixed with the official F1 licensed cars, tracks and drivers would've been spot-on. Instead you've got something so dumbed down it doesn't work as arcade or sim. What a waste. ✷

Even the AI drivers can't be bothered to jockey for position. Neither can we then

CVG VERDICT

MATT

GRAPHICS 6
Flat, drab-looking courses with bad sluggishness and rubbish slowdown in multiplayer

SOUND 5
Hoover-like engines and awful American voice-over in Arcade mode – enough to give you a headache

GAMEPLAY 4
Doesn't deliver in either mode. It doesn't even give a sense of speed for chrissakes. Not fun

LASTING APPEAL 6
There are loads of options and a Career mode – assuming you can be arsed

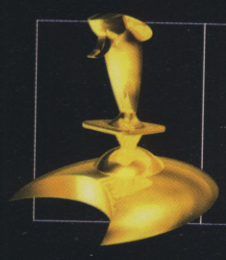
A big let-down for F1 enthusiasts and driving fans in general. Getting pushed round your garden in a wheelie bin suddenly sounds like fun to us.

OVERALL SCORE 51

HOW IT COMPARES
- TOCA RACE DRIVER 2
- FORMULA ONE 2004
- INDYCAR 2005

THEY'RE BACK...

AND COMING FOR YOU!



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The time will soon be here to start voting for the biggest and most exciting games of the past year. Your vote really counts, so make sure you have your say on who will walk away with the biggest gaming accolades of the year!

Watch this space for details on how to vote!

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Still hungry for more, even after thumbing through this game-packed issue of CVG? Logging onto **ComputerAndVideogames.com** will satisfy the biggest gaming appetites

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ON INFO!

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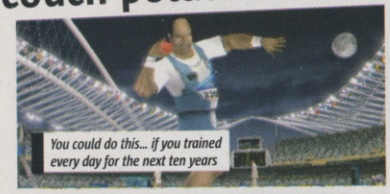
RELEASE DATE
2 JULY

GAME INFO
COST: £39.99
PLAYERS: 1-4

CONTACT INFO
PUB: SCE
DEV: EUROCOM
WWW.PLAYSTATION.COM
CONTACT: 020 8343 7337

ATHENS 2004

Will turn couch potatoes into... couch potatoes with sore fingers!



You could do this... if you trained every day for the next ten years

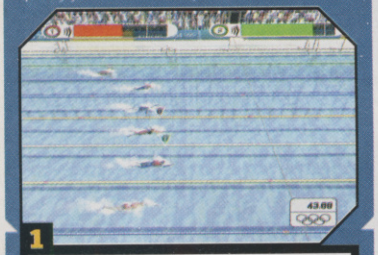
If you recognise the participants, this sort of detail will give you a real wallop

Everyone's ready to race, but the Dutch guy thinks he hears someone offering ice cream

TIPPITY-TAPPITY

Most events in Athens 2004 require button tapping to succeed.

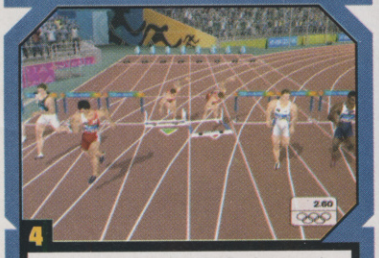
Basically, alternate between the X and O buttons to gain speed or power, plus one other button used to breathe, jump, or lift and so on. It seems that all the athletes have the same stats to begin with. Performance is all down to how quickly you can bash away.



1 ■ In between hammering the buttons, you need to press L1 to breathe while swimming

2 ■ Tap away as fast as you can to stand a chance in the 100m race. It really hurts your wrist!

3 ■ Gain speed by tap-tap-tapping, then line up the meter to make it over the bar in pole vault



4 ■ It's all about the timing in hurdles, but you can't see when they're coming so it sucks!

Whether you're big into the Olympics or not, most of us can appreciate the drama and excitement of this huge, sporting event.

Many of us have already enjoyed the potential of Olympic events with Konami's consistently excellent Track And Field series. Perhaps by playing it a bit too cautious, Sony's Athens 2004 delivers little of the atmosphere and even less of the fun associated with a multiplayer game.

It feels very much like what we suspect it set out to be – a hopeful cash-in on whatever level of enthusiasm grips the globe surrounding Athens 2004 – with the best bits of Track And Field to support the hit and miss nature of what original content is in there.

LIKE BEING AT SCHOOL

As we start getting down to what makes the Athens 2004 game a letdown, we should start with the presentation. Bearing in mind that EA and Konami have been showing the way for rousing intro sequences and attractive, friendly menu systems for over a decade, you'd expect Sony to get these things right. Well no, and hell no.

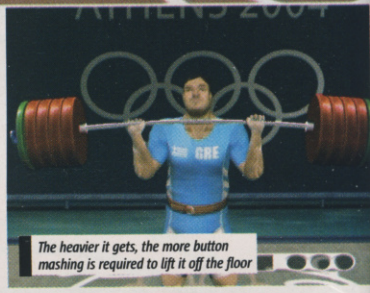
WHY SO GLUM?

The Olympics are celebrated as the showcase for the greatest athletes on planet Earth, but there's not even a glimpse of the real competitors showing how it's done. You're handed straight from the PS2 logo to Mode Select.

From here, apart from slapping an official Olympic mascot here and there, and an ugly little globe that looks like a football rolled in doggy-doo (nice shade of brown), all the presentation amounts to is lists of plain text taking you to game modes and associated events. Makes Open University look like the MTV Awards.

Presentation aside, our issues are not related to lack of technical excellence – getting something on screen that is acceptable has been achieved. Our major gripe is that Sony missed its opportunity to rethink how an athletics game can be played. Sony isn't in the same position as Konami, having to meet expectations of a long-running series.

It has, or rather had, the chance to make Athens 2004 into a game that folks would have fun getting to grips with... or could even enjoy playing at all.

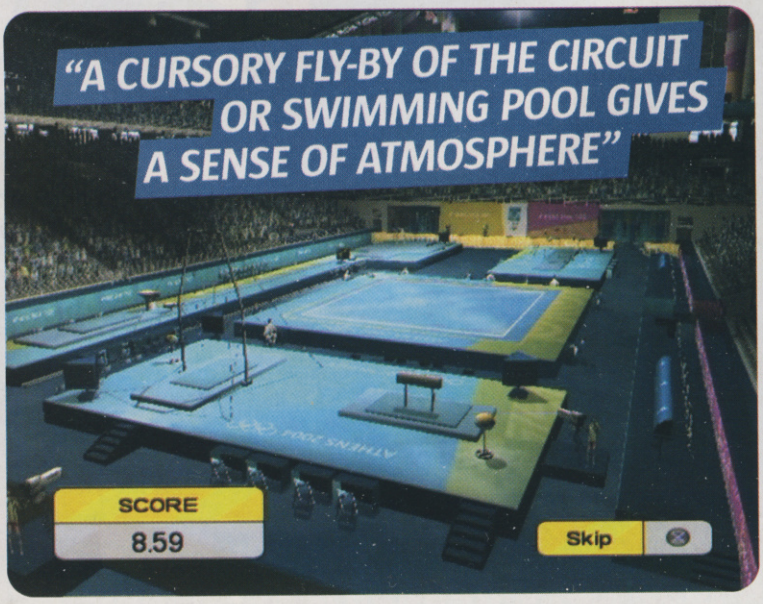


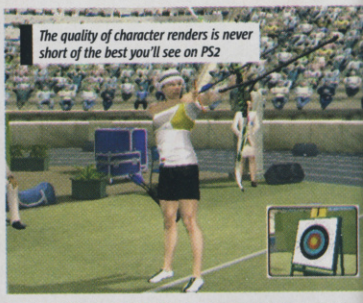
The heavier it gets, the more button mashing is required to lift it off the floor

SECOND WIND

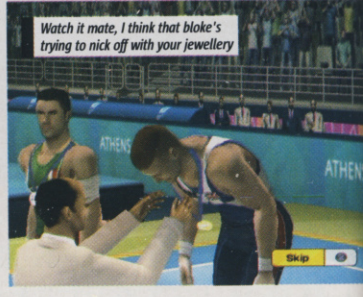
There were a couple of points where we started to warm to the game – the methods used to compete at Discus and Show Jumping, for example, give a sense

"A CURSORY FLY-BY OF THE CIRCUIT OR SWIMMING POOL GIVES A SENSE OF ATMOSPHERE"





The quality of character renders is never short of the best you'll see on PS2



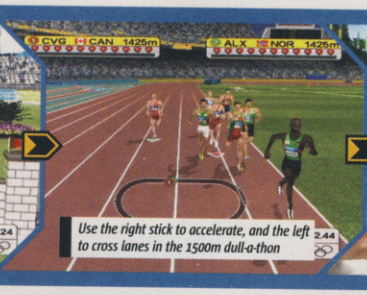
Watch it mate, I think that bloke's trying to nick off with your jewellery

Competition becomes slightly more interesting in events where button tapping would be too boring or completely out of

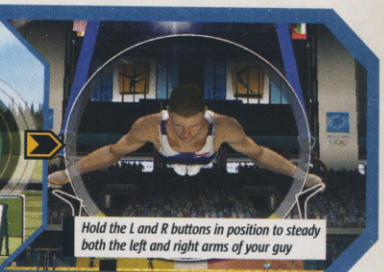
WIGGIDY-WAGGIDY

place. So in Skeet Shooting, Archery and the 1500m race, control is handled by the analogue sticks and one other button.

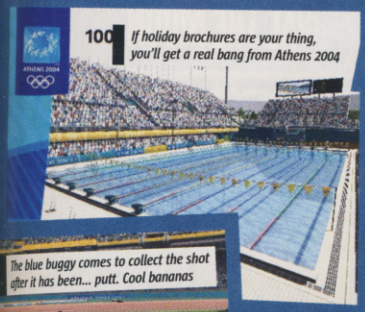
Simply gee up the horse using the right stick, and guide with the left, with L1 to jump


Use the right stick to accelerate, and the left to cross lanes in the 1500m dull-a-thon

Line up the sights using the right stick, taking into account wind direction and speed

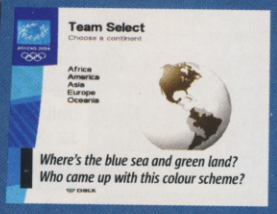

Hold the L and R buttons in position to steady both the left and right arms of your guy

"MOST EVENTS ARE DULL TO COMPETE IN, BUT THE HURDLES ARE STUPIDLY UNFAIR"


100 If holiday brochures are your thing, you'll get a real bang from Athens 2004

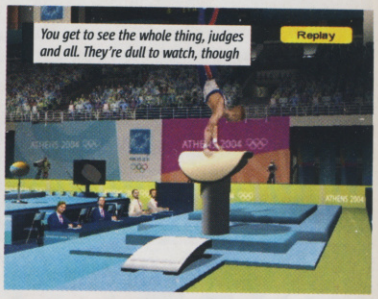
The blue buggy comes to collect the shot after it has been... putt. Cool bananas

The crowd is better than in any football game, and almost looks lifelike we'd say

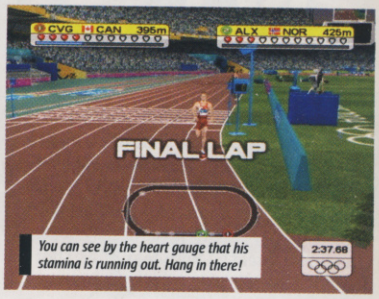


Where's the blue sea and green land? Who came up with this colour scheme?

The intro scene isn't even animated. Reminds us of the old Amiga games



You get to see the whole thing, judges and all. They're dull to watch, though



You can see by the heart gauge that his stamina is running out. Hang in there!

PREVIOUS GAMES
- Buffy The Vampire Slayer: Chaos Bleeds, James Bond 007: NightFire, Harry Potter ATCOS, Sphinx

HARD FACTS
- 64 countries
- 800 sports people
- 25 events
- Four arcade modes
- Eight comp modes

DID YOU KNOW?
The Olympic Stadium in Athens isn't even built yet. Fingers crossed it's completed by August in time for... the Olympics!

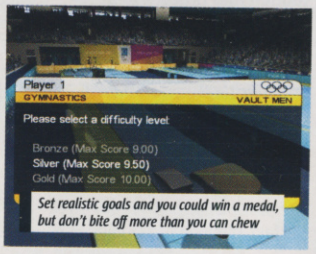
of what the game could have been elsewhere. We like the 'second wind' idea used for the 1500m race, timing one last burst of energy in the approach to the finish line. It's also worth taking into account the larger number of events compared to the limited number in Konami's ESPN Track And Field. But then most are dull to compete in, and in one particular case – the hurdles – stupidly unfair.

Athens 2004 is packed with authentic detail, which is one good thing

IT'S TV!

Visually, at least, Athens 2004 avoids being a disaster. Athletes line up before the start of every event, step forward to wave when their name is mentioned, then pick at their shoes or jump up and down to shake off nerves, waggle their heads, whatever.

There's always a cursory fly-by of the circuit, swimming pool or designated area for events such as Skeet Shooting to give you a sense of place, if not atmosphere. In motion, whether it's the wavering of a bow in archery or the hypnotic windmills of arms in the backstroke-swimming race, the game looks like TV. Only one thing saves Athens 2004 from being a complete waste of DVDs, and that's the it's-not-genius but-it-works option to use a dance mat.



Set realistic goals and you could win a medal, but don't bite off more than you can chew

THE LAST DANCE

However, since this game sets itself up to be not much fun to begin with, we doubt you'll convince many people to hop around pretending they're doing a floor routine on behalf of the people in Ghana. At a push, you could unravel the thing at a party when everyone's full of too much fizzy pop and Frazzles and watch them explode... ✷

TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE

If the game comprised more techniques along the lines of those in Discus Throwing or the Men's Floor Exercise we'd have a much better time of it.

You really feel as if you're building power for the jumps and throws – and then you need to get your timing right when letting rip. A training mode would have been ace, showing us each step of a technique, with on-screen buttons to show how it's done.

When throwing the shot, it's important to match the power with the trajectory

Time your button presses to coincide with the dial on screen to keep the legs going

Athens borrows Konami's original idea to have a 'dance' input for women's floor exercise. It still rules

GRAEME

CVG 2ND OPINION

I think of myself as a button-bashing athlete, having trained hard with Konami's awesome International Track And Field. That's why playing this was such a bummer. There's loads of events but they're either over-simplified or poorly thought out, and even with loads of mates it's dull. A bit like Greece's Olympic facilities: hastily put together and a bit wonky.

PAUL

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS 82
Really terrific level of detail in every event, but the presentation element is terrible

SOUND 79
Good commentary with remarks appropriate to the performance. Truly rotten tunes

GAMEPLAY 55
Feels more like an experiment in manageable interfaces than in enjoyable gameplay

LASTING APPEAL 55
Worth an hour or so from time to time, but only if you can rope in enough mates

Sony claims this is 'designed to capture the spirit and emotion of the Olympic Games'. Somehow this has been translated onto PS2 in a cold, unimaginative way.

OVERALL SCORE 61

HOW IT COMPARES
ESPN INT. TRACK AND FIELD
ATHENS 2004
BISHI BASHI

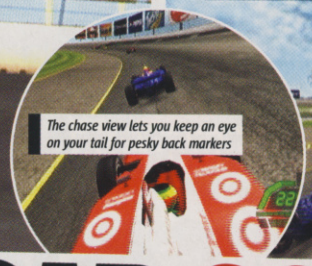
RELEASE DATE
25 JUNE

GAME INFO
COST: £39.99
PLAYERS: 1-4

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: CODEMASTERS
- DEV: CODEMASTERS
- WWW.CODEMASTERS.CO.UK/INDYCAR2005
- CONTACT: 01926 816044

ONLINE GAMING
- ONLINE RACING
- 1-12 PLAYERS (XBOX)
- 1-8 PLAYERS (PS2)

The replays are a bit of a let-down – they're too far from the action and you can't manipulate the camera


The chase view lets you keep an eye on your tail for pesky back markers

It's like A Question Of Sport: what happened next? Clue: everyone dies

INDYCAR 2005

Strap yourself into the fastest and most hardcore racer on the tarmac

Sploosh! That's the sound of your brain bursting like a water bomb against the back of your skull when you floor IndyCar 2005. If there was ever a game that deserved to come bundled with a seatbelt, this is it.

It's so good at searing the speed onto your retinas that squeezing the accelerator gives you an insanely wicked rush. It's pure excitement greased with fear, then shot out of a cannon.

That's what IndyCar racing's all about. It's the USA's equivalent of F1, with cars designed to push 240mph without disintegrating, or leaving two skidmarks and disappearing Back To The Future.

Races take place exclusively on ovals, but criticising IndyCar for that is like taking the piss out of footie for being a bunch of blokes kicking a ball. There's a hardcore level of complexity to oval racing that, if you can be arsed, is consuming. IndyCar gets it spot on.

Functioning wing mirrors are a new addition. It's a nice touch but we'd expect it anyway

NEED FOR SPEED

Visuals are sparse and blocky, but this clean simplicity means the backgrounds move ultra-fast with no jerkiness. The screaming engines sound amazing and we love the way the crowd's howls morph into a weird sci-fi 'WHOARSH' as you fizz by the grandstands.

The way the cars perform is tuned to give the ultimate speed rush. Acceleration is sudden and brutal like a hammer to the head, and cornering is twitchy but precise. Thundering into a bend in your opponent's slipstream with 23 other drivers sniffing at your tailpipe feels awesome, and doing endless circles can bring on a weird, meditative trance-like state as you strive for that perfect lap.

Analogue steering wheel support has been added. It's wicked with PS2's GT Force wheel, but there's no quality Xbox equivalent

PREVIOUS GAMES
- Colin McRae 04, TOCA Race Driver 2, Club Football, LMA Manager, Operation Flashpoint, World Championship Snooker

HARD FACTS
- Number of tracks: 15
- Number of licensed drivers: 27
- Number of licensed team cars: 16
- Maximum number of cars on track: 33
- Top speed: 250 mph

DID YOU KNOW?
- IndyCars accelerate to 100mph in 2.9 seconds, which is about nine seconds quicker than a Porsche, and at top speeds the rubber on IndyCar tyres is hot enough to boil water.

Less cool is IndyCar's lack of variety. You can do single races or a full Indy Championship, the tutorial mode is great, and online play with eight (PS2) or 12 (Xbox) players adds a needed extra dimension, but there's little else that improves on last year's version or lengthens the experience. Coupled with the endless ovals and compared to the variety on offer in TOCA 2 or Gotham 2, this is where Indy suffers.

That said, this is still the fastest racing game on the shelves. If you're a hardcore motoring fan, the 240mph rush is worth scraping the brains off the back of your skull. ✶

The clever AI means drivers are constantly nudging at your rear, often causing spins

OVAL THE MOON

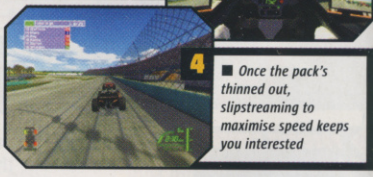
But it's just going round in circles, innit? Well yeah, but there's a bit more to it than that.

Tweaking your car to find the perfect set-up is addictive and shaving thousandths of seconds off lap times becomes an obsession. Unfortunately there's little reward for your hard work. Why not stick in a career mode where you can start your own race team and unlock upgrades to take you to the top?

1 You can tweak every important aspect of your car. Not the most exciting thing in the world, it has to be said

2 But if you've got the time, the hard work pays off when you stick in a smoking qualification lap

3 Oval racing dull? Not when you've got 24 opponents to fight through and the pack's this tight


4 Once the pack's thinned out, slipstreaming to maximise speed keeps you interested

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS 7
Stripped back for speed but the presentation is pretty dull and functional

SOUND 8
Engines that scream like nipped banshees and cool speed effects

GAMEPLAY 8
Sizzling sensation of speed and sweet handling, but requires muchos dedication

LASTING APPEAL 6
Hardcore fans will love the focus, but the rest of us would like more variety

As a racing game it blows its engine too quickly, but as a simulation of a hardcore motorsport it's fantastic. Strictly for dedicated speed freaks.

OVERALL SCORE 70

HOW IT COMPARES
TOCA 2
INDYCAR 2005
PROJECT GOTHAM 2

The sensation of speed never lets up and never gets old. You'll play just for the rush

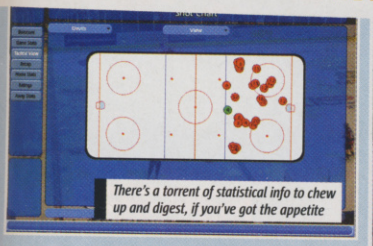
High-speed collisions can flip the flimsy motors off the track, showering fans with shrapnel

Like TOCA 2's oval racing, the sheer number of cars on track is well impressive

RELEASE DATE	GAME INFO	CONTACT INFO
9 JULY	COST: £29.99 PLAYERS: 1-30	PUB: SEGA DEV: SPORTS INTERACTIVE WWW.SPORTSINTERACTIVE.CO.UK CONTACT: 0845 609 0090

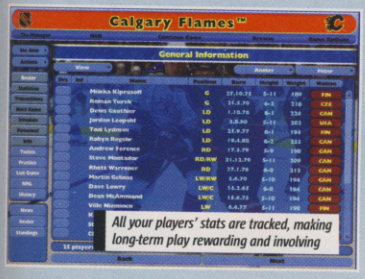
NHL EASTSIDE HOCKEY MANAGER

Championship Manager with ice hockey. That's all you need to know


There's a torrent of statistical info to chew up and digest, if you've got the appetite

There are 20,000 players and the stars have a mugshot on their stats screen. It's a nice touch that Champ lacks

The player comparisons are clearer than Champ Man's, letting you make decisions quicker


All your players' stats are tracked, making long-term play rewarding and involving

No stampede when this skated into the office. "Grazza lived in America – give it to him!" they yelled, and it landed on my desk like a bodycheck from a 17-stone defenseman.

When I lived in the US I went to an NHL game once. It was the funniest experience I've ever had at a sporting event. There was a fat man dancing. Genius. But that's not my only qualification: I'm a proper Championship Manager addict, and Eastside isn't all that different.

It's been around in mod form for a while but this is the first official release. You choose any team from 20 worldwide leagues including the NHL and both British leagues, and assume the role of manager.

The interface is instantly familiar to Champ Man fans. It's not beautiful, but it's built for functionality. The important thing is that Eastside is stuffed with enough stats, facts and figures to thaw an ice rink. Choosing your tactics is deep and rewarding, and the training allows sufficient control over your players' workouts without being too anal. The match engine itself looks dated, but the commentary reflects the speed of the game and you have all your management options at your fingertips.

So it's good then – basically Champ Manager for ice hockey. It's intense and stat-heavy, but also insanely addictive if you immerse yourself in it. No dancing fat men, though. ✷

GRAEME

CVG VERDICT

If you're REALLY into ice hockey you'll love the in-depth stat-fiddling and the obsessive tweaking will keep you up all night. Icily hardcore.

OVERALL SCORE **73**

HOW IT COMPARES
CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 03/04
NHL EASTSIDE HOCKEY MANAGER
PREMIER MANAGER 2003/2004

RELEASE DATE	GAME INFO	CONTACT INFO
OUT NOW	COST: £39.99 PLAYERS: 1	PUB: SEGA DEV: AMAZE WWW.SEGA.COM/GAMES CONTACT: 020 8995 3399

PS2

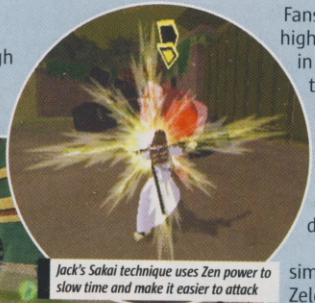
SAMURAI JACK THE SHADOW OF AKU

Dry-as-a-bone humour brightens things up

Increase Jack's strength, Zen, and physical power at the shrines located in each village

While it doesn't come close to meeting Samurai Jack's personal code of excellence, there are a few glimmers of goodness in The Shadow Of Aku.

It seems the guys at Amaze at least had a laugh applying videogame lore to this grumpy Japanese warrior. He's fun to mess around, sporting some cool-enough fighting moves in general, aided by the neat Sakai ability that allows him to slow time Matrix-style.

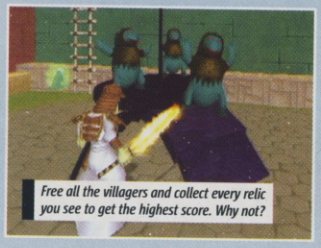

Jack's Sakai technique uses Zen power to slow time and make it easier to attack

Good deeds are rewarded with enhancements to Jack's katana, such as this fire magic

Fans of SJ will appreciate the high production values at least in terms of voice acting by the original cast, with Jack's typically hilarious, solemn statements. The art is also faithful to the TV series, so exploring the environments and smirking at the dim bad guys is fun while it lasts.

It actually plays out like a very simplistic alternative to Legend Of Zelda, with doors opening once certain enemies are killed, or special keys found to open doors. Elsewhere, switches summon water to douse fires and open new pathways, or ropes can be cut to reveal a secret entrance. You get the idea.

Although we don't recommend you rush out and buy Shadow Of Aku, even if you're the biggest fan in the world, it's not a complete waste of time. Rent it for a weekend and you won't be sorry. ✷


Free all the villagers and collect every relic you see to get the highest score. Why not?

PAUL D

CVG VERDICT

A respectable though pointless adventure for Jack. Treats the kooky ancient samurai with honour but the gameplay feels older than he is.

OVERALL SCORE **58**

HOW IT COMPARES
ONIMUSHA 3
SAMURAI JACK
NINJA GAIDEN

RELEASE DATE
25 JUNE

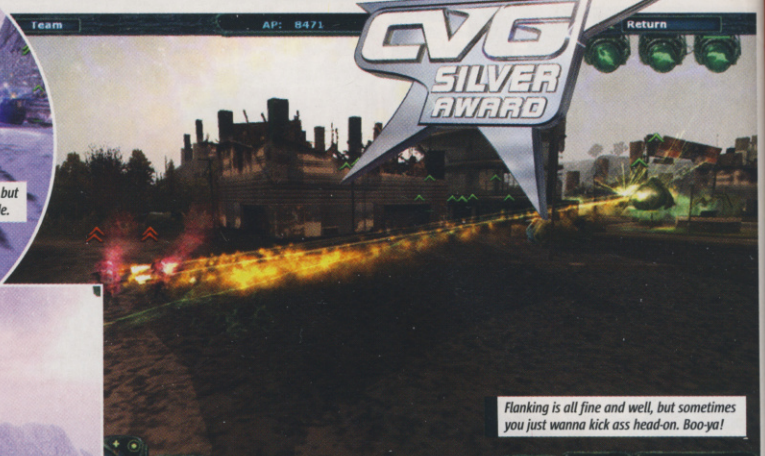
GAME INFO
COST: £34.99
PLAYERS: 1-8

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: VU GAMES
- DEV: MASSIVE ENTERTAINMENT
- WWW.GROUNDCONTROL2.COM
- CONTACT: 0118 920 9100

GROUND CONTROL II: OPERATION EXODUS

You want action? You want strategy? You want Ground Control II, dude

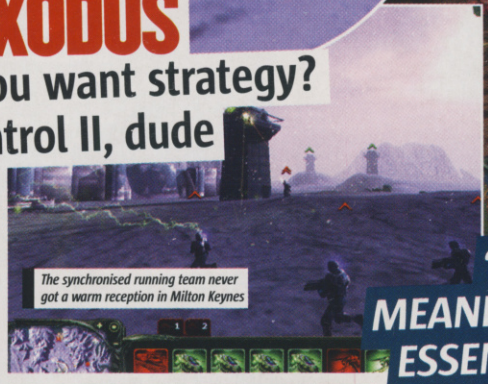
You can run, but you can't hide.



CVG SILVER AWARD

Flanking is all fine and well, but sometimes you just wanna kick ass head-on. Boo-ya!

In the future everything is bigger. Even bogies



The synchronised running team never got a warm reception in Milton Keynes

You'll need to do more than mass units for 'tank rushing'

"TACTICS PLAY A MAJOR ROLE, MEANING THAT FLANKING IS AN ESSENTIAL SKILL TO MASTER"

Dropships deliver reinforcements to the battlefield. So, no chance of a pizza then?

SPLIT PERSONALITIES

Like just about every contestant who has ever set foot in the Big Brother house, all the units in Ground Control II come with an alter ego.

But while only the arrival of mystery housemate Mr B Laden could liven up proceedings on Channel 4's yawnathon, the secondary functions of GC II's units sex things up a bit with distinct advantages and disadvantages.

1

■ Artillery is slow but lobs explosive shells miles. Its Siege Mode fires four times but is easy to flank

2

■ Fortresses' twin gun turrets rock! Alt mode is slower but side armour slides out for grunts to hide behind

3

■ Viron units have secondary functions plus Meld with other units to make better ones too. Takes time, though

Ot really gets on our tits how many real-time strategisers are just about getting *this* resource, building *that* structure, droning on and on like your history teacher until you either fall asleep, die of boredom or something FINALLY happens. We'd far rather get on with nuking the enemy with pure firepower.

Which is why we like Ground Control II, an all-out action strategy gem boasting some of the most intense virtual conflicts ever. It's so easy on the eye and sexy in the sack it's nudged Perimeter out of CVG's bed and back into the communal dorm where our vast harem of PC strategisers languish.

GCII is about dominating each level and overrunning enemies through a combination of superior firepower and fiendish tactics. Every map has Victory Locations and Landing Zones dotted all over it like zits at a Busted gig. Your task is to capture these and make like Clearasil – wipe the offending sods clean off the face off the map. The more Victory Locations you win, the more Acquisition Points you're given to buy reinforcements that come by Dropship.

ANOTHER KICK IN THE BALLS

Firefights are seriously intense with explosions booming out all over the shop as squads of men, tanks, artillery, rocket-launchers and helicopters go at it like rabid dogs. Tactics play a major role, meaning that flanking is an essential skill to master, while holding the high ground and sheltering in bunkers and buildings will also give you a major edge.

There are two campaigns to play. The first sees you fighting as the Northern Star Alliance as they attempt to fight off the evil Imperial Empire, led by the merciless Imperator Vlaana, who's a complete bitch with an arse you could park a Harley in.

The second campaign puts you in control of alien race the Virons – green-skinned pug-uglies that talk like Yoda gargling sulphuric acid. However, the excellent plot that runs through both campaigns is seen exclusively through the eyes of NSA captain, Jacob Angelus.

GCII does suffer some nasty AI and control glitches that'll get you frothing, but overall it's a belter. If you want tactics and action that look good enough to cover in treacle and run your tongue all over – but don't give a toss about resource management – try it out pronto.

Looks plenty purty don'tcha think?

PREVIOUS GAMES
- Ground Control

HARD FACTS
- Two campaigns featuring more than 20 levels in total
- Two fairly unique sides to play as
- Over 35 different unit types, all with handy secondary functions
- Tactical landscape

DID YOU KNOW?
- GCII's lead character, Captain Jacob Angelus, looks uncannily like Massive Entertainment's CEO Martin Malfisz. Just stick a beret on Martin and add the worst cockney accent in the history and it's a spitting image.

If you see an artillery strike coming get the hell out of the way, soldier

Not in my back yard! Let's kick those Imperial Empire hides

MARTIN

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS 88
The explosions, weapon effects and scenery are among the best we've seen in a PC RTS

SOUND 87
Big booms, cries for help from outnumbered troops and great voice acting = atmospheric

GAMEPLAY 83
Fast, furious and tactical, but sullied by some fiddly control issues and annoying AI bugs

LASTING APPEAL 82
One-player has little replayability, but some great multiplayer options

A thrilling and hugely strategic strategiser that's resource management-free. Stops short of greatness due to some dodgy glitches and a few duff levels.

OVERALL SCORE 85

HOW IT COMPARES
MEDIEVAL: TOTAL WAR
GROUND CONTROL II
PERIMETER

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A Link to the Past
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Crash Nitro Kart
Dragonball Z: L. of Goku 2
Earthworm Jim 2
Final Fantasy Tactics
Golden Sun
GT Advance: Championship
Harry Potter: Chamber of S.
Harry Potter: P. of Azkaban
Harvest Moon: F.of M.Town
Leg. of Zelda: Link to Past
Lord of the Rings: R.of King
Mario & Luigi: S'star Saga
Mario Kart Super Circuit
Mega Man Battle Network 3
Metroid: Zero Mission
Peter Pan: Ret.to Neverland
Pokemon Ruby
Pokemon Sapphire
Sega Smash Pack
Sonic Advance
Sonic Advance 2
Sonic Battle
Spyro: Season of Flame
Spyro: Season of Ice
The Legend of Zelda (NES)
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2
Yu-Gi-Oh! Dung.Dice Mons.
Yu-Gi-Oh! Sacred Cards
Yu-Gi-Oh! World C.Tour.'04
Yu-Gi-Oh! World Wide Ed.
Plus Many More...

PC

Age of Empires 2
Age of Empires 2: Conquer.
Bad Boys 2
Black & White: Creature Isle
Broken Sword 2
Caesar 3
Champ. Manager '03/'04
Championship Manager 4
Civilization 3
Com. & Conq.: Generals
Com. & Conq.: Tiberian Sun
CSI: Crime Sc. Investigation
Far Cry
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City
Harry Potter: Philosophers S.
Heroes of Might & Magic 3
Homeworld 2
Jedi Knight 2: Jedi Outcast
Lemonade Tycoon
Mafia
Manhunt
Max Payne
Medieval: Total War
Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit
Operation Flashpoint
Patrician 2
Quake IV*
Sims
Sims: Deluxe
Singles: Flirt Up Your Life
Soldier of Fortune 2
Splinter Cell
Star Wars: Phantom Menace
Stronghold
Stronghold: Crusader
Theme Hospital
Total Club Manager 2004
True Crime: Streets of LA
Plus Many More...

GAMECUBE

Ace Golf
Aggressive Inline
Blood Omen 2
Buffy 2: Chaos Bleeds
Bulletproof Monk*
Burnout
Conflict: Desert Storm 2
Dakar 2
Def Jam Vendetta
Die Hard: Vendetta
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai
Eighteen Wheeler
Enter the Matrix
Eternal Darkness
FIFA 2002
Finding Nemo
Gladius
Godzilla: Destroy all Monst.
Harry Potter: Chamber of S.
Harry Potter: P. of Azkaban
Harry Potter: Quidditch Cup
Harvest Moon 2: Wond. Life
Leg. of Zelda: Ocarina of T.
Leg. of Zelda: Wind Waker
Leg.of Zelda: Majora's Mask
Luigi's Mansion
Mario Kart: Double Dash
Mario Sunshine
Medal of Honor Frontline
Medal of Honor: R. Sun
Mega Man Network Tran.
Metal Gear Solid: T. Snakes
Metroid Prime
Mission Impossible:O.Surma
Mortal Kombat: Deadly All.
NBA Street Volume 2
Need for Speed Undergr'nd
Need for Speed: H.Pursuit 2
Nightfire
Phantasy Star Online
Pikmin 2*
Pokemon Colosseum
Prince of Persia: S. of Time
Rebel Strike, R. Squadron 3
Reign Of Fire
Res. Evil: Code Veronica X
Resident Evil
Resident Evil 3: Nemesis
Resident Evil Zero
Scorpion King
Simpsons: Hit & Run
Sims: Bustin' Out
Sonic Adventure 2 Battle
Sonic Mega Collection
Soul Calibur 2
Sphinx & Cursed Mummy
Splinter Cell 2: Pandora T.*
Star Wars: Bounty Hunter
Star Wars: Jedi Knight 2
Star Wars: Rebel Strike
Star Wars: Rogue Leader
Starfox Adventures
Super Mario Sunshine
Super Monkey Ball 2
Super Smash Bros Melee
The L. of Zelda: WindWaker
The Sims: Bustin Out
Time Splitters 2
Tony Hawk's Underground
True Crime: Streets of LA
Viewtiful Joe
WWE Wrestlemania X8
X-Men 2: Wolverine's Rev.
X-Men: Next Dimension
Zelda: Majora's Mask
Zelda: Master Quest
Zelda: Ocarina of Time
Zelda: The Wind Waker
Plus Many More...

X-BOX

Alias
Armed and Dangerous
Blinx: The Time Sweeper
Broken Sword: S. Dragon
Bruce Lee: Quest Dragon
Combat Elite: WWII Paras*
Dark Angel, J. Cameron's
Dead or Alive 3
Dead or Alive Volleyball
Deus Ex: Invisible War
Dino Crisis 3
Driver 3*
Elder Scrolls: Morrowind
Everything or Nothing: 007
Fight Night 2004
Ghost Recon
Ghost Recon:Island Thunder
Grand Theft Auto 3
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City
Great Escape
Halo
Harry Potter: P. of Azkaban
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin
Hitman 3: Contracts
Indiana Jones: Emp.'s Tomb
Inter. Superstar Soccer 2
James Bond: E. or Nothing
Jurassic Park: Op. Genesis
Knights of the Old Republic
LMA Manager 2004
Mafia
Manhunt
Medal of Honor Frontline
Metal Arms:Glitch in System
Midtown Madness 3
Mortal Kombat: Deadly All.
MX Unleashed
Need for Speed Undergr'nd
Ninja Galden
Outlaw Golf
Phantom Dust*
Prince of Persia: S. of Time
Project Gotham Racing
Project Gotham Racing 2
Rainbow Six 3
Rallisport Challenge 2
Red Dead Revolver
Robot Wars: Extr.Destruction
Rollercoaster Tycoon
Sega GT 2002
Shenmue 2
Silent Hill 2: Inner Fears
Sims
Sims: Bustin' Out
Splinter Cell
Splinter Cell 2: Pandora T.
Star Wars: Jedi Knight 2
Star Wars: Knights Old Rep.
Suffering
The Sims: Bustin Out
The Suffering
The Thing
Thirteen
Tiger Woods Golf 2004
TOCA Race Driver 2
Tony Hawk's Underground
Top Spin
True Crime: Streets of LA
Turok, Evolution
Urban Freestyle Soccer
Van Helsing
Vexx
Vice City, Grand Theft Auto
Voodoo Vince
World Champ. Snooker '03
WWE Raw 2: Ruthless Aggr.
Yager
007 Agent Under Fire
Plus Many More...

PLAYSTATION 2

A = 0 1
Age of Empires 2
Agent Under Fire
Alias
Alone in the Dark 4
Angel of Darkness
Athens 2004*
B = 0 2
Bad Boys 2
Battlestar Galactica
BMX XXX
Broken Sword 3: S. Dragon
Buffy 2: Chaos Bleeds
C = 0 3
Colin McRae Rally 4
Conflict: Desert Storm 2
Crash B'coot: Wr. of Cortex
D = 0 4
Dark Cloud 2
Deadly Skies 3
Devil May Cry 2
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2
Driver 3*
Dynasty Warriors 3
Dynasty Warriors 4
E = 0 5
Enter the Matrix
Escape from Monkey Island
F = 0 6
FIFA 2003
FIFA 2004
Fight Night 2004
Final Fantasy X
Final Fantasy X-2
G = 0 7
Getaway
Ghost Hunter
Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm
Gladiator: S. of Vengeance
Gran Turismo 3
Gran Turismo 4 Pro.Edition
Gran Turismo 4*
Grand Theft Auto 3
Grand Theft Auto: V. City
H = 0 8
Harry Potter: Chamber of S.
Harry Potter: P. Azkaban
Headhunter
Headhunter: Redemption*
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin
Hitman 3: Contracts
Hyper Street Fighter 2
I = 0 9
Iron Storm*
J = 1 0
Jak 2: Renegade
James Bond 007: Nightfire
James Bond: E. or Nothing
Jet Li's Rise to Honor
Judge Dredd:Dredd v Death
Jurassic Park: Op. Genesis
K = 1 1
Kingdom Hearts
L = 1 2
Largo Winch
Legacy of Kain: Defiance
Legends of Wrestling 3*
LMA Manager 2003
LMA Manager 2004
Lord of the Rings: R.of King
M = 1 3
Mace Griffin: Bounty Hunter
Mafia
Manhunt
Matrix, Enter the
Max Payne
Max Payne 2
Maximo
Medal of Honor Frontline
Medal of Honor: R. Sun
Metal Gear Solid 2
Midnight Club 2
Mission Impossible:O.Surma
Mortal Kombat: Deadly All.
Moto GP 3
N = 1 4
Naval Ops:Warship Gunner
Need for Speed Undergr'nd
No One Lives Forever
O = 1 5
Onimusha 3: Demon Siege
P = 1 6
Premier Manager 2002
Premier Manager 2003
Prince of Persia: S. of Time
Pro Evolution Soccer 2
Pro Evolution Soccer 3
R = 1 8
Rainbow Six 3
Ratchet and Clank
Ratchet and Clank 2
Red Dead Revolver
Red Faction
Red Faction 2
Res. Evil: Code Veronica X
Return to Castle Wolfenstein
Richard Burns Rally*
Riding Spirits
Rise to Honor
Run Like Hell
S = 1 9
Shrek 2*
Silent Hill 2
Simpsons: Hit & Run
Simpsons: Road Rage
Sims
Sims: Bustin' Out
Smash Court Tennis Pro 2
SOCOM 2: US Navy Seals
Sonic Heroes
Sphinx & Cursed Mummy
Spider-Man: The Movie 2*
Splinter Cell
Splinter Cell 2: Pandora T.
Star Trek: Shattered Univ.
Suffering
Summoner
Syphon Filter: Omega St.
T = 2 0
Teenage Mut. Ninja Turtles
Terminator 3 R.of Machines
The Getaway
The Mummy Returns
The Return of the King
The Sims
The Sims: Bustin Out
The Suffering
The Thing
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Time Splitters 2
Tomb Raider: Angel of Dark.
Tony Hawk's Underground
Total Club Manager 2004
Transformers
True Crime: Streets of LA
Turok, Evolution
V = 2 2
Van Helsing
Vice City, Grand Theft Auto
W = 2 3
Way of the Samurai 2
WWE Smackdown! 5 HCTP
X = 2 4
X-Files: Resist or Serve
Y = 2 5
Yu-Gi-Oh! Duel. of Roses
Plus Many More...

GAMEBOY COLOR

Dragon Warrior Monsters 2
Legend of Zelda: Seasons
Mario Land
Mario Land 2
Pokemon Blue
Pokemon Crystal
Pokemon Gold
Pokemon Red
Pokemon Silver
Pokemon Trading Card
Pokemon Yellow
Silver Pokemon
Super Mario Bros DX
Zelda: Links Awakening DX
Zelda: Oracle of Ages
Zelda: Oracle of Seasons
Plus Many More...

NINTENDO64

Blues Brothers 2000
Goldeneye
No Mercy, WWF
Zelda: Majora's Mask
Zelda: Ocarina of Time
Plus Many More...

DREAMCAST

In Nippon Pro Wrestling 2
Metropolis Street Racer
Resident Evil: C. Veronica
Sonic Adventure
Tomb Raider 4: Last Revel.
Plus Many More...

PS-ONE

Alone in the Dark 4
Beyblade
Breath of Fire 4
Broken Sword
Chase the Express
Com. & Conq.: Red Alert
Die Hard Trilogy
Digimon World
Dino Crisis
Dracula The Last Sanctuary
Driver 2
Duke Nukem: Time to Kill
Final Fantasy 7
Final Fantasy 8
Final Fantasy Origins
Harry Potter: Philosophers S.
LMA Manager 2001
LMA Manager 2002
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX
Mortal Kombat Trilogy
Parasite Eve 2
Rayman
Roswell Conspiracies
Scooby Doo: Cyber Chase
Shadowman
Silent Hill
Soul Reaver
Spiderman
Spyro the Dragon
Syphon Filter
Time Crisis
Tomb Raider
Tomb Raider 3
Tomb Raider 5: Chronicles
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4
Yu-Gi-Oh! Forbidden M.
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IMPORT REVIEWS

FULLY INDEPENDENT & MULTIFORMAT ✷ TRUST NO ONE ELSE

THE DISC IS SCRATCHED

The whole idea of this section is to seek out gems we might otherwise miss out on. Usually we strike it rich, and have the pleasure of tracking a great game from its origins overseas to a high-profile UK release – Namco's Breakdown for Xbox springs to mind. Of course, we're not always going to be so fortunate, and CVG had a miserable time with two of our import stash this month. .

So we'll pretend Winning Post 6 never happened, and put Vib Ripple down to experience. That said, we'll also be patting ourselves on the back for bringing CoCo Curry House to your attention and hoping that you can track it down. And we're glad to give you the lowdown on Namco's re-entry to the football market with its highly-anticipated Football Kingdom. It's not at all bad, and is a promise of greater things to come.

But there's only one game I know of that's going to be on everyone's minds this summer, and that's Winning Eleven 8 from Konami. Anticipating the arrival of something so huge is what makes importing stuff so cool. Relatively few people will own this in the UK, but it will generate so much excitement for PES 4 (the European update of WE8) that spending the extra money will be worth it.

Thanks again to CEX (www.cex.co.uk), who provided all the games you see reviewed this month. CEX would like us to remind you that they are the only place you can trade in any imported game (apart from Nintendo titles) for other imports or UK releases. We'll no doubt be pestering CEX for WE8 when it comes out in August.

Paul Davies

Paul Davies *The Import King*

PS2

RELEASE DATE	GAME INFO	CONTACT INFO
OUT NOW	IMPORT COST: £55 PLAYERS: 1	✷ PUB: KOEI ✷ DEV: KOEI ✷ WWW.GAMECITY.NE.JP/KEIBA

Not sure if our horses are getting anything from this place apart from toothache

Here's where you buy new sheds, feeding equipment, and various other permanent fixtures

Choose where you'd like to set up your stables, this will affect the health of your steeds

WINNING POST 6 MAXIMUM 2004

Japanese horses for Japanese courses

Well, we finally bit off more than we could chew this time. And instead of tasting the sweetness of a pedigree racer, we got a mouthful of soiled hay.

After our success at getting some way into Derby Stallion last issue, we pushed the envelope a little further and imported KOEI's Winning Post 6.

Here's what we do know, before trying to explain everything else that we really don't. Winning Post 6 Maximum 2004 is the horse-racing equivalent of Winning Eleven 7 International. That is, a horse-racing simulation with a heavy emphasis on cultivating a stable of thoroughbreds – now with the added bonus of featuring international horse races and the ability to breed horses with those from overseas.

PREVIOUS GAMES
- Winning Post 5, G1 Jockey 3, Dynasty Warriors

HARD FACTS
- Import data from G1 Jockey and Winning Post 6
- All-new story mode
- Breed with foreign steeds

DID YOU KNOW?
- The oldest horse in living memory was a barge horse called Old Billy. He lived to be 62 years old.

SHOUTING WON'T HELP

Apparently, data from Winning Post 6 and G1 Jockey 3 can be imported to Max 2004. Since we don't own either of those games, and wouldn't know what to do with them even if they were on hand, we can only apologise and imagine how good that would be.

"WE BOUGHT A COUPLE OF HORSES BY ACCIDENT, WATCHED THEM GRAZE IN A SNOWY FIELD"

To be honest, any progress we made was pure luck. The idea is to create a Trainer ID, then set up the finest stables in the land to breed the finest horses. We bought a couple of horses by accident, watched them graze in a snowy field. Occasionally a woman popped up on screen to offer advice, and colleagues chatted to us. Sometimes racing results came through, and we got a weather report. The only thing we didn't do was race. Perhaps this isn't a feature of Winning Post 6 Maximum 2004 after all. For us, this was a big waste of time. ✷

SADDLE SORE

There's certainly a lot in store for the budding Japanese breeder of champions.

You start the game with millions of Yen. You'll need a good stable, a training circuit, and don't forget a cool outfit for your jockey and the horse!

1. You'll be spending a long time with this ol' hoss, so make him look real purdy... Now that's a fine-lookin' stallion
2. If you're gonna ride my horse, you're gonna wear what I tell you to wear! I think that's a smashing outfit
3. Set yourself up as a horse breeder, with an ID card and everything. At least you'll be able to read your own name
4. Catch up on the latest comings and goings in the world of Japanese horse racing. Hmm, interesting...

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS 81
This really is a good-looking game, with glossy presentation and a classy style

SOUND 67
We missed out on the races, so we just got the pleasant muzak and select noises

GAMEPLAY 55
We were defeated by all the Japanese stats and never really got to grips with it!

LASTING APPEAL 15
So incomprehensible it didn't take us long to feel completely demoralised

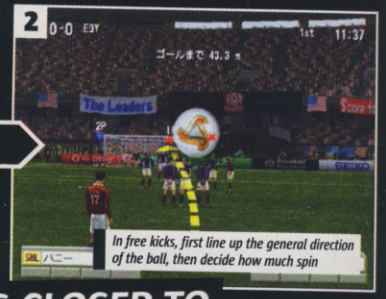
We've no doubt this has the potential to be a great game – if you've got a degree in Japanese! We were barely able to get past the options screens!

OVERALL SCORE 34

HOW IT COMPARES
- ATHENS 2004
- WINNING POST MAX 04
- HARVEST MOON: WL

LANGUAGE BARRIER: Absolutely impossible to enjoy unless you know Japanese

You can send people the wrong way with fancy footwork, so it's worth practising



In free kicks, first line up the general direction of the ball, then decide how much spin

"FOOTBALL KINGDOM FEELS CLOSER TO PES THAN FIFA. IT'S A GAME YOU WANT TO TAKE SERIOUSLY"

The likenesses are awful, but it's the gameplay that matters and Football Kingdom does well

FOOTBALL KINGDOM TRIAL EDITION

Soccer as only the creators of Soulcalibur and Smash Court Tennis know how...

Making a football game that works, before making it look nice, is the way to go in our opinion. Lord knows we hated FIFA long enough before EA realised that spectacle is no substitute for the sublime. So we should thank Namco for taking a fresh look at what makes our great game so enjoyable.

A NEW MOUNTAIN TO CLIMB

Namco's gift to console football is quite similar to FIFA 04's Off The Ball system, but with the emphasis on smart team AI instead of directing the runs into space manually.

The idea is to combine another player's free run with your passes into space, and in a single-player game you learn to appreciate the options it gives you on the attack. Runners are indicated by arrows, and you'll often have two or three to choose from. It beats the frustration experienced sometimes in PES when you're unsure who's ready to receive the ball from you. It's more instant, and therefore free flowing than FIFA's manual solution. But even though it works, it doesn't revolutionise console football as we know it.

However, we are still looking forward to how Namco builds on this for sequels that must surely be in the pipeline.

GROUNDS FOR CONCERN

The stadiums in Football Kingdom are based on real ones, and splendid in detail. Shame the same treatment wasn't afforded the players.

PREVIOUS GAMES
- Tekken 4, Soulcalibur II, Smash Court Tennis

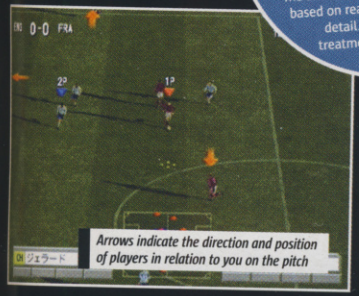
HARD FACTS
- Authentic Japanese stadiums
- Authentic Japanese national squad
- 6 in-depth game modes

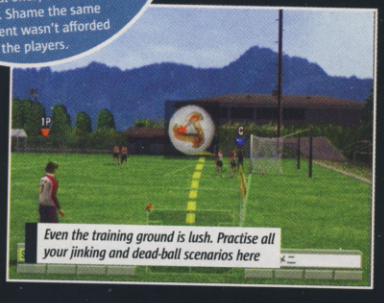
DID YOU KNOW?
- This guy is midfielder Shunsuke Nakamura, who plays for Reggina in Italy. He's Japan's answer to David Beckham!

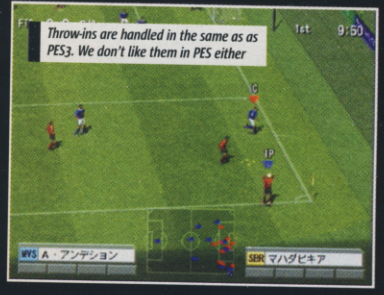
MAGIC SKILLS

We've come to rely on the close on-the-ball control in PES to buy time on the ball, in addition to making those 'wonderful jinking runs' that lead to a goal. The OTB stuff in Football Kingdom is pretty useful in practice, more so than the fakes from a standstill as employed by FIFA and those clumsy lurches from side to side. In FK, you can do lollipops and flip the ball over the player's head with their heel, and so on, depending on individual stats. Everything is handled using combinations of L2 and R2, and even dashing seems to modify some techniques which is refreshing after PES.

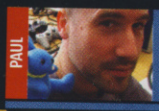
We'd say Football Kingdom feels closer to PES than FIFA. It's a game you want to take seriously, and unlike Club Football, doesn't feel like a turgid simulation trying to pass as entertainment.


Arrows indicate the direction and position of players in relation to you on the pitch


Even the training ground is lush. Practise all your jinking and dead-ball scenarios here


Throw-ins are handled in the same as as PES3. We don't like them in PES either

CVG VERDICT


PAUL

GRAPHICS — 70
Although the animations look good, players have poor detailing and dodgy likenesses

SOUND — 77
Ball effects are decent, and the crowds sound okay. The soundtrack is a mess though

GAMEPLAY — 73
The passing system works, but there are collision issues player-on-player and on the ball

LASTING APPEAL — 67
You'll be determined to get the most from it, but the reward just isn't big enough

Beneath its slightly old-fashioned looks and lack of authentic players, there's a system worth believing in. We hope the sequel makes a better fist of it.

OVERALL SCORE 72

HOW IT COMPARES
- FIFA 2004
- FOOTBALL KINGDOM
- PES 3

LANGUAGE BARRIER: You'll miss out on many of the finer details, but the game is easy enough to enjoy

KINGDOM'S SUBJECTS

Kingdom mode in Football Kingdom has more in common with Master League in PES, than Career Mode in FIFA 04.

Create a team from scratch, and see how far you can take it through the league. You can also compete in Cup modes or just jump right in for a quick Exhibition match. Plus you can change the look of individual team members – as we have here...

We know who this is, but we think he could do with a makeover in Edit Mode...

...Yeah, this is more like it. Can't wait to see what Victoria makes of his new look! Cool shades...

Our new-look Beckham joins the England squad in the tunnel, ignoring the snickers

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

GAME INFO: IMPORT COST: £55 PLAYERS: 1-2

CONTACT INFO: PUB: DORAT DEV: DORASU WWW.DORASU.COM

COCO CURRY HOUSE ICHIBAN-YA

Some tasty little ideas in this spicy little number

This mini game tests your memory. It gets crazy complicated, and made us want to cry

If you watched Hell's Kitchen, you know a bit about Gordon Ramsay. He's the culinary equivalent of Simon Cowell, with a red-hot chilli pepper stuck up his ass.

Ramsay's show was pretty much 'Big Brother Inna Kitchen' in which he does his best to piss off minor celebrities while they try to cook dinner. The show was crap, but if you ever wanted to know how stressful it is to run your own restaurant, in particular one that sells curry by the lorry-load, CoCo Curry House is here to show you.

We got this one in because it's called CoCo Curry House. It's very much as expected – a brightly coloured, very Japanese and of course curry-flavoured experience. Strange it may be when compared to what you'd usually find on the UK high street, but then you never thought you'd get hooked on The Sims, did you? Just like curry, we think the appeal of this game could be universal.

PREVIOUS GAMES
- Slottermania: Juggle Special, Slottermania New Vegas

HARD FACTS
- 30 varieties of curry
- Eight mini-games
- Two people working the shift in the curry house

DID YOU KNOW?
- Curry and rice is the second favourite dinner dish in the UK

WORKING IN CURRYS

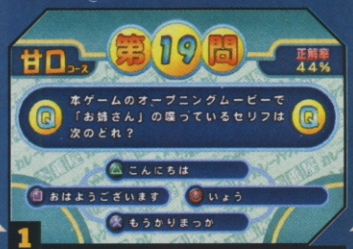
You've just been hired to work as a chef in the CoCo Curry House. You'll be serving up food from now on, and rewarded for your skill. Since this is a Japanese curry house, you must be very polite to your customers as they arrive and leave – very important that. A waitress cheerfully darts about the restaurant taking orders, zapping the details to you from her high-tech notepad. It starts off simple with heaps of rice and ladles of curry; teaching you the basic skills of scooping by twirling the right analog stick, and pouring by leaning the stick on its side. The techniques cleverly match the actions required in real life. Sort of.

Things get trickier as drops of chilli oil (tap the stick) and fried toppings are added. Then the essential "Welcome to our shop" greeting (press L2), and "Thank you very much" farewell (R2) must be juggled between serving dishes. You're at the top of your game when you can get every cooked item to finish in time to serve up several dishes in succession, rewarding you with 'combos' and 'chains' similar to most puzzle games. And just like those games, the routine becomes very addictive. ✷

TOO MANY KOOKS

CoCo is served with two side orders: a curry quiz, and mini games. Even if you read Japanese you need to be a curry expert to survive the quiz – and that's just on Novice level.

Do you know which day of the week is Curry Day for the Japanese navy?! The mini-games are more straightforward, and a bit of a laugh.



1 ■ Even if you do know what it's saying, you still need to be a curry expert if you want to win

2 ■ Bash the O button to gobble as much curry as possible before it's time up

3 ■ Throw ducks at each other in this mini-game. First to get rid of them all wins – it's that simple

4 ■ Guide the courier to each customer in town. You need to deliver as many curries as you can

When you're doing well the gauge representing you (blue) leaps ahead of the time gauge

CVG VERDICT

PAUL

GRAPHICS — Simple and cute style, for girls and young kids, but perfect for the job — P

SOUND — Much shouting and the crackle of fritters frying with J-Muzak playing — 6

GAMEPLAY — Prepared with a medley of playful ingredients to leave you feeling satisfied — P

LASTING APPEAL — Genuinely fun and funny in single-player – shame multiplayer is reserved for two — P

We expected this to be terrible. Instead it's a very clever and enjoyable single-player challenge that's as fun to watch as it is to play. Cool and cute.

OVERALL SCORE 71

HOW IT COMPARES THE SIMS · COCO CURRY HOUSE · BURGER BURGER

LANGUAGE BARRIER: The quiz is impossible, but the rest you'll be able to figure out easily enough

FRYING TONIGHT

If you want to keep the customers coming back for more, they'll expect a speedy service and their meals prepared to perfection.

The various techniques employed to serve up food should be practised individually, and with an overall strategy in mind. So think about what you're doing when you dish up your servings – it's such a time-waster if you can't get 150g of rice in one scoop!

■ Scoop out rice by twirling the analogue stick clockwise

■ Toss a few things into the fryer at once to speed up the process

■ Special toppings are chosen from a whirling roulette of ingredients

RELEASE DATE OUT NOW

GAME INFO IMPORT COST: £55 PLAYERS: 1

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: SCE
- DEV: SCE
- WWW.JP.PLAYSTATION.COM

Not entirely sure how this happens, but Vib becomes invincible sometimes. Bzzang!

VIB RIPPLE

The game that invites you to jump on your mate's head

This is the second sequel to the popular and very cool Vib Ribbon: the wire-frame rabbit that skipped along to your music CDs on PSone.

Mojib Ribbon, the first sequel to be released for PS2 in Japan at the end of last year, did amazing things with calligraphy in time to music. You should look it up – it's great. The gag with Vib Ripple is that you upload your own photos and jump around on them as you would a trampoline!

If the little nasties bite Vib (or whatever it is they do to him) he'll turn into a frog...

RABBIT RUSE

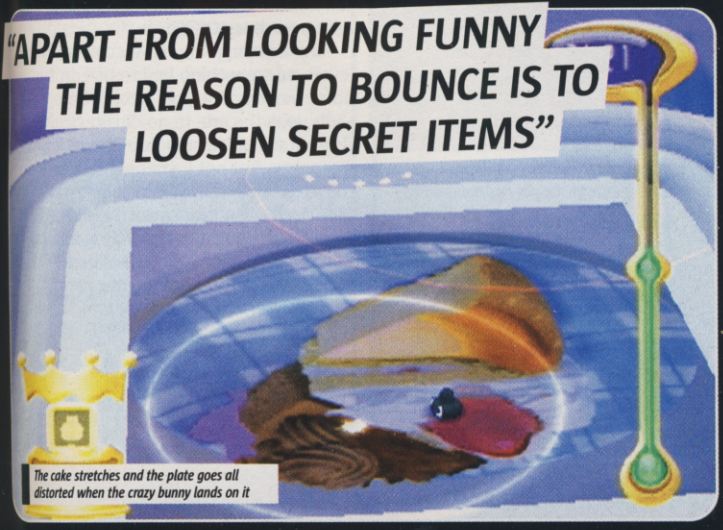
Apart from Vib looking funny flailing around in mid-air, the reason to bounce is to loosen secret items trapped beneath the surface. These seem to be themed on the picture, at least with the default images, but generally include the likes of fruits, bugs, cakes and presents. Find them all before the timer runs out while avoiding nasty (but cute) meanies that patrol the area.

The game comes with supplied images but photos can be transferred via USB, and shared over Sony's online network in Japan. You can even modify them for that extra personal touch. Obviously if you're importing this game, the network gag falls flat. Also you need one of a few specific brands and models of digital camera to make use of the USB function.

PREVIOUS GAMES
- Vib Ribbon

HARD FACTS
- Import your own photo
- Edit your own photo
- Exchange photos via the internet or mobile phone

DID YOU KNOW?
- When rabbits feel like mating they run around in circles. We guess it must be sexier than trampolining



The cake stretches and the plate goes all distorted when the crazy bunny lands on it

VIB: ONE FUNNY BUNNY

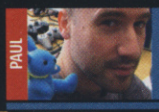
There's not a whole lot to explain about the game itself. You just bounce around on photos – but we suspect there must be hidden depths.

Jumping on some areas makes vortexes appear, we're not sure why. Others start to flash, on some the colours start to bleed and Vib suddenly starts flashing orange making him invincible. It's a game you have to feel your way around to get the most out of. Hmm...

1 ■ Vib unearths some sort of leaf from the blotchy canvas, and looks very pleased

2 ■ So many weird and wonderful patterns to choose from. What secrets do they hide?

CVG VERDICT



GRAPHICS 60
If you're someone who goes for style over content you'll love it. Otherwise it's crummy

SOUND 49
Repetitive music that'll drive everyone around you insane. Vib sounds cute though

GAMEPLAY 37
It's very, very basic – just bounding around on a trampoline

LASTING APPEAL 40
You might stick it on for a giggle every once in a while but the gag wears out quickly

The appeal is the sharing of comedy photos combined with the funny jumping around. On its own the gameplay gets tired pretty quickly.

OVERALL SCORE 40

HOW IT COMPARES
- VIB RIBBON
- VIB RIPPLE
- MOJIB RIBBON

LANGUAGE BARRIER: It's fairly straightforward working out how to upload photos, but customising is a problem

AMERICAN RELEASE DATES

PLAYSTATION 2

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
13.7	Athens 2004	SCE
	Combat Elite: WWII Paratroopers	Acclaim
	Crimson Tears	Capcom
	Karaoke Revolution Vol.2	Konami
14.7	NCAA Football 2005	EA
20.7	Army Men: Sarge's War	Global Star Software
	Catwoman	EA
	Growlanser Generations	Working Designs
27.7	A Dog's Life	Hip Games
	Echo Night Beyond	Agetec
	Street Fighter Anniversary Collection	Capcom

XBOX

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
5.7	Combat Elite: WWII Paratroopers	Acclaim
6.7	Pro Fishing Challenge	Atlus Software
9.7	Room Zoom	Jaleco Entertainment
13.7	NCAA Football 2005	EA
	Samurai Warriors	KOEI
	Sudeki	Microsoft
15.7	Pure Pinball	XS Games
19.7	Army Men: Sarge's War	Global Star Software
20.7	Catwoman	EA

GAMECUBE

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
6.7	Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow	Ubisoft
12.7	Pokémon Box	Nintendo
13.7	Tales of Symphonia	Namco
	World Championship Pool 2004	Jaleco Entertainment
14.7	NCAA Football 2005	EA
20.7	Puyo Pop Fever	Sega
21.7	Catwoman	EA

GBA

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
1.7	Kim Possible 2: Drakken's Demise	Disney Interactive
13.7	Ice Nine	BAM! Entertainment
26.7	Hamtaro: Ham-Ham Games	Nintendo
30.7	Catwoman	EA
	Racing Gears Advance	Orbital Media

JAPANESE RELEASE DATES

PLAYSTATION 2

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
1.7	Demon Bane	Kadokawa Publishing Co., Ltd.
	Tetsujin No. 28	Bandai
	Gatcha Mechal Stadium Salvatore	SCE
	Smash Court Pro Tournament 2	Namco
	Monkey Turn V	Bandai
8.7	Crash Bandicoot: Nitro Cart	Konami
15.7	Wa: Legend of the Water Seven	SCE
	Boy's Love Scramble! Type B	NEC Interchannel
	Powerful Pro Baseball 11 Simulation	Konami
	Eye Toy: Sports	Konami
	Digital Devil Saga	Atlus
22.7	Taiko Drum Master Fourth Generation	Namco
	Tenchu Kuernai	From Software
	Gradius V	Konami
	Full House Kiss	Capcom
	Best Price Missing Blue	Tonkin House
29.7	F-Fanatic	Princess Soft
	KOF Maximum Impact	SNK Playmore
	Yatta! Assa Bakina	Kid
	Sunbeam Ave: Change of Season	GN Software
	Tokyo Demon School	Marvellous Interactive
	Yu-Gi-Oh: Monster Colosseum	Konami
	I Love Baseball	Sammy
	Guilty Gear Isuka	Sammy
	The Nightmare of Druaga	Arika
	Pateishe Kitty: First Taste of Love	Pione Soft
	Rockman X: Command Mission	Capcom

XBOX

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
8.7	Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3	Ubisoft
22.7	Magic: The Gathering Battlegrounds	Microsoft
	Voodoo Vince	Microsoft
	X2: Wolverine's Revenge	Microsoft

GAMECUBE

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
1.7	Donkey Kong Hit Song Parade	Nintendo
8.7	Ranch Story Wonderful Life for Girls	Marvellous Interactive
	Crash Bandicoot: Nitro Cart	Konami
	Koroke! Ban King Crisis	Konami
15.7	Powerful Pro Baseball 11 Simulation	Konami

GBA

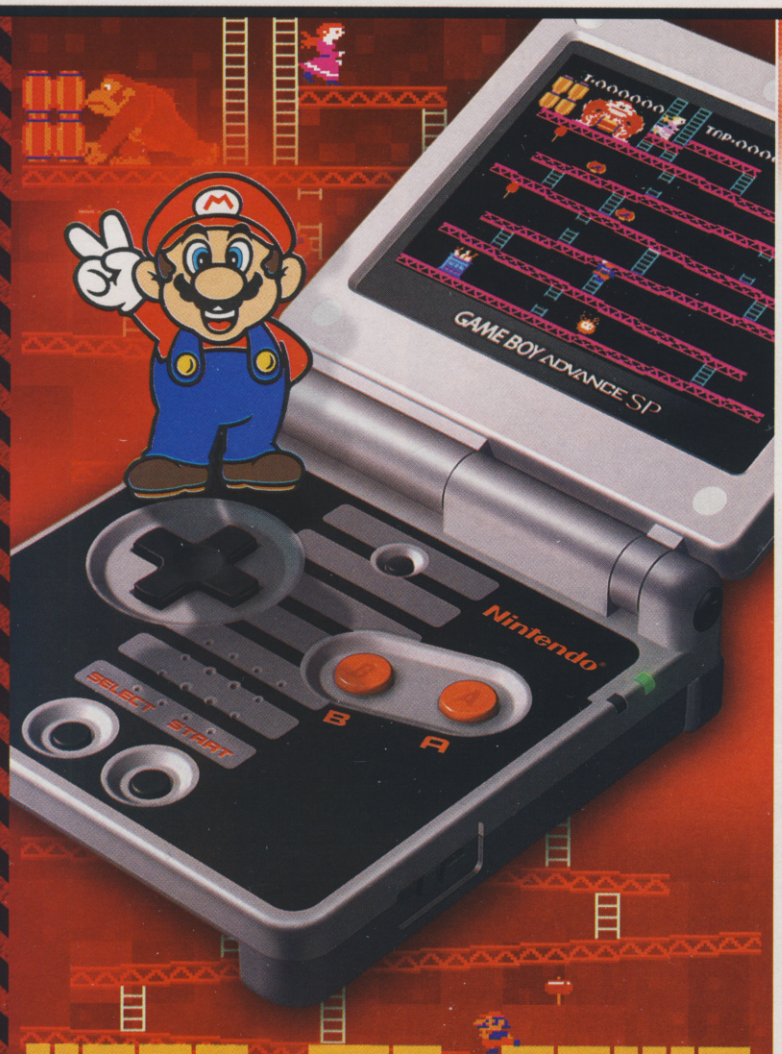
DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
1.7	Gakko no Kaidan	TDK Core
	Super Donkey Kong 2	Nintendo
15.7	Tottoko Hamtaro Ham Ham Sports	Nintendo
	Final Fantasy I.II Advance	Square-Enix
22.7	Boktai: Sunboy Jango	Konami
	Koroke! Bank of God Forest	Konami
24.7	Puyo Puyo Fever	Sega
29.7	Power Pro-Kun Pocket 1.2	Konami

NEO GEO

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
29.7	Samurai Spirits Zero Special	SNK Playmore

LOOK OUT NEXT MONTH! NEW WAVE OF IMPORTS

We'll be able to make some noise with Front Mission 4 on PS2, and maybe create a stir in the J-League with Sega's soccer management game. Oh yeah, and Metal Slug 3 for Xbox online... Brilliant! We'll see what we can do to get Samurai Spirits in as a farewell to Neo-Geo, but at 300 sheets it'll be a tall order.

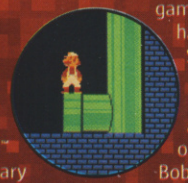


HAND-ME-DOWN GREAT-NES

IT'S A HISTORY LESSON ON GAMING'S BIGGEST ICONS: THE CLASSIC NES SERIES FROM NINTENDO

Nintendo devours its past and shits money. That's the way it works. This time, the excuse is that you haven't bought NES games off them for twenty years.

It's time to get all teary-eyed as Ninty celebrates this anniversary with a new £80 GBA SP that's been stickered up like the NES console, and eight classic games at £15 a throw. That's about the cost of an actual NES plus games on eBay. It's a cool looking handheld, but is it worth it? Sure, you can't fault the list of heroes on offer. Mario, Donkey Kong, Link, Pac-Man – of the all-time gaming legends the only name missing is Bubsy The Bobcat. Dunno how Bomberman made this list though. That never came out on the NES over here. Maybe Ninty had a few left over from the US run, eh?

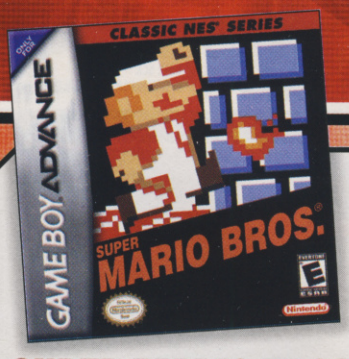


IT'S WHAT'S INSIDE THAT COUNTS

When Nintendo did this in Japan, it did it properly. Each game came packaged in a miniature version of the original game box, and looked cooler than a polar bear in a Von Dutch ninja suit.

Luckily, us UK gamers get ours in those nob little cardboard cases we're already bored of. Thanks a bunch for that, Nintendo.

How it should and shouldn't be done



SUPER MARIO BROS

OUT: 9 JULY * COST: £14.99 * PLAYERS: 2 (ALTERNATE)

If you saw a question mark block hovering in the street, what would you do? You'd leg it up and nut it, obviously. Like, durr.

It's impossible to overstate the importance of Super Mario Bros in the history of games. Without this, we'd be nowhere. Mario runs across fields, ducks through caves and swims like a fish. It's essentially exactly the same game as the original NES one – and it's an epic made out of Lego bricks.

Sure, his agility here isn't a patch on Super Mario World – it's like his dungarees are made of lead, actually – but you HAVE to play this. The warp pipes. The secrets. The princess is in another castle. It's pure gold, basically. Well, apart from the 'jumping on the axe' bit to kill the bosses. What's that all about?

Problem is, Nintendo has offered you this many times before. Super Mario Bros Deluxe on Game Boy Color added loads of bonuses over the core game on offer here, so that's really the version to own.

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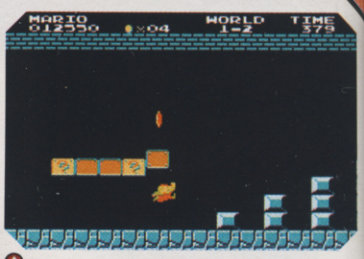
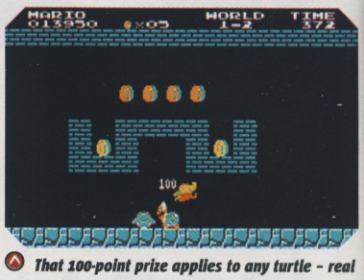
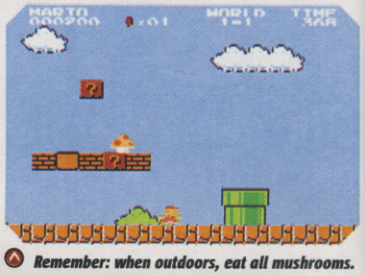


The underpowered NES could still pull off stunning background effects like... total darkness

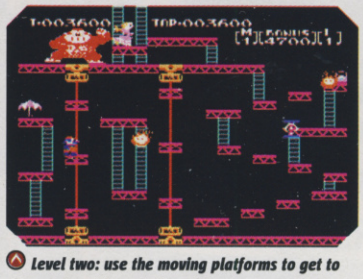


That 100-point prize applies to any turtle – real or not. Only your local pet shop WILL call the cops



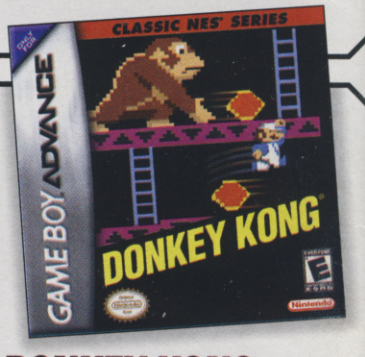
Remember: when outdoors, eat all mushrooms. The ones that look deadliest do the coolest things

Spoiler alert! Here's the whole game. Climb up till you reach the ape. He grabs the girl and runs



Level two: use the moving platforms to get to the monkey. He grabs the girl and runs again

Level three: Walk over all the yellow plugs, the girders collapse and the monkey dies. The end



DONKEY KONG

OUT: 9 JULY * COST: £14.99 * PLAYERS: 1

If you don't finish Donkey Kong inside ten minutes, you should try playing it with your eyes OPEN.

The arcade game has a colossal FOUR levels, so something had to give in the home version. The pie factory stage, sadly, was the one to go. So you only get three stages of running up girders to get a monkey. But not just any monkey: that's DONKEY KONG. And the guy is MARIO. This isn't just a cart: it's the videogame equivalent of that stable in Bethlehem. Leaping barrels is great. The sound effects resonate in your gamer soul. The relief is massive when, at the top of the screen, a barrel rolls harmlessly across the top of your ladder instead of magically rolling down it. You spring up, drop the ape on his face, and kiss the girl.

It's the greatest love story ever told, but it's just far too damn short.

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THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

OUT: 9 JULY ✷ COST: £14.99 ✷ PLAYERS: 1

You know that jingle in Zelda when you open a chest, the one you'd LOVE to play in real life whenever you did something remotely cool? That started here.

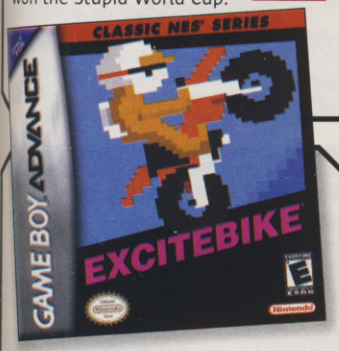
It all started here. All that widescreen 3D brilliance was pioneered in the NES game, albeit in Micro Machines form. You'll recognise enemies and puzzles throughout. It drips with that magical Zelda feel, even if you can only just make out Link's nose. This graphical grossness does make negotiating the overworld a bit of a headache, but if you've ever wielded a Master Sword in anger it's essential.

There's none of that sail boat bollocks, just logical dungeoneering. And a bastard end boss called Ganon. Only problem is Ninty already gave this away for free on the Zelda Collector's Disc. So if you have that and buy this, congratulations. You just won the Stupid World Cup.

84

You only GOT THE SWORD. Do the sound effect. You just did, right? You're a loser like us then

You either let those turds spit balls at you or carve 'em with the sword. Do the noise again



EXCITEBIKE

OUT: 9 JULY ✷ COST: £14.99 ✷ PLAYERS: 2 (LINKED)

It's a puzzle that's baffled Earth's leading minds for 20 years. Just how have we just completed a 'lap' on Excitebike without turning a corner?

It didn't seem like the bike was going fast enough for us to have completely circumnavigated the Earth. What we lack in logic we make up for in little bikes doing massive jumps off muddy ramps. You can overheat the bike too. Once the joy of jumping wears off though you're basically driving in a straight line avoiding holes. Grab the amazing N64 remake off eBay for the same money.

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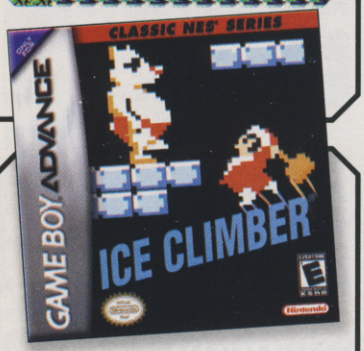

ICE CLIMBERS

OUT: 9 JULY ✷ COST: £14.99 ✷ PLAYERS: 2 (LINKED)

You know those random snow guys in Super Smash Bros Melee? Well, THIS is who the hell THEY are.

There's something magical about Ice Climbers still, and we don't even mean the bits where you crack seals heads' open with hammers. It's all about smashing your way forever upwards. The inertia on the boys is tricky to grasp, but it's simple and beguiling stuff. Add two wireless adaptors and a friend, and you can play co-op Ice Climbers with some kind of magical air link. Even Jesus doesn't know how that works, but he loves it.

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BOMBERMAN

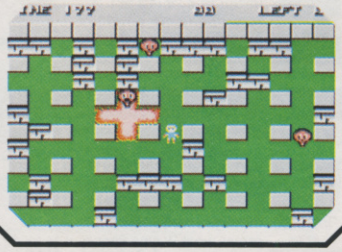
OUT: 9 JULY ✷ COST: £14.99 ✷ PLAYERS: 1

We could be wrong, but we imagine there's a sign at the Ford factory that says 'Remember: Cars need WHEELS. This is IMPORTANT'.

A special braniac award, then, for the clown at Hudson that forgot to put a multiplayer mode in the first ever Bomberman game. Thus removing The Whole Point.

So why a lonely game about blowing up walls on your own has made it into a 'Classic' series is anyone's guess. Besides, this game never even came out in the UK on the NES in the first place. Frankly, you'd have as much fun blowing your arms and legs off with a real bomb.

30



XEVIOUS

OUT: 9 JULY ✷ COST: £14.99 ✷ PLAYERS: 1

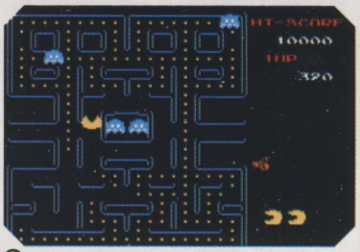
This is what happens when you have brilliant ideas, but can't actually draw to save your life. So Xevious features a neat system where you also have to blast ground as well as air targets.

It's a real buzz throwing bombs on gun turrets as you pick through a spray of bullets. The downside? You basically get attacked by Polo mints and spinning grey squares.

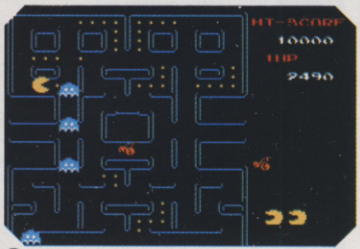
The Xevious people couldn't write music either, opting for a looping two-note whine that actually makes you want to crawl in a hole and die. Everyone should play a shoot 'em up from time to time, but not this one.

53

The ghosts' daily committee meeting to discuss how not to change blue when Pac-Man eats pills



Another strategy fails. Pill is ingested, a state of panicked blueness ensures. Question is: why?



Kill three ghosts of eat the fruit? It's the kind of dilemma we all wrestle with on a daily basis

PAC-MAN

OUT: 9 JULY ✷ COST: £14.99 ✷ PLAYERS: 1

The NES version of Namco's classic pill-munching game is almost arcade-perfect. That said, we could draw an exact copy of a stick man.

Piece of piss, actually. But if you find yourself not grinning as you pop a power pill just as the four ghosts are closing in, you aren't human. That sudden, glorious role reversal remains one of the greatest feelings in videogames. The fear and panic evaporates, leaving only retributory blood lust. CHOMP!

We've never worked out why Pac-Man's diet consists mainly of round things, but he draws the line at ghost eyes. When he dies, he even eats himself. That's when you REALLY know you have an eating disorder. At the end of the day though, it's Pac-Man. You can play it on the internet for free. They gave the newest version away for free with Cube R-Racing, so £15 for this feels like a rip.

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COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES CVG

Big 50!

Only the best and biggest games make it into our Big 50. Don't fancy any of this month's reviews? One of these'll please you – guaranteed!

BOKTAI 85%

■ GBA ■ Konami ■ £29.99

A genuinely innovative vamp-twatter from MGS genius Kojima that weaves a light-sensitive gizmo on your GBA cart into the gameplay. We love that playing in the sunshine charges up your weapon and makes boss fights easier as your enemies are weaker during daylight hours, but if this really is Kojima trying to get gamers outside more then we say: No! Leave our pasty complexions alone.

007 EVERYTHING OR NOTHING 83%

■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ EA ■ £39.99

EA must love pain, 'cos every year it does a Bond game and every year someone disses it for not being as good as GoldenEye. Same this year, only it really isn't that far off. No, honestly.

ADVANCE WARS 2: BLACK HOLE RISING 91%

■ GBA ■ Nintendo ■ £29.99

Proof that strategy games aren't for speccy twats called DarthMaul897364. Advance Wars 2 is addictive, challenging and... uh-oh, the F word... fun!

BATTLEFIELD VIETNAM 88%

■ PC ■ EA ■ £29.99

It's 1942 shoved through EA's update sausage factory, but packing more Vietnam War movie moments than a Huey doorgunner has ammo.

BURNOUT 2: POINT OF IMPACT 91%

■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ Acclaim ■ £19.99 - 39.99

For people that love driving VERY FAST, this is a gift from the gods. No-frills, balls-out, unadulterated arcade racing with wicked pile-ups. Still ace a year on.

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 03-04 84%

■ PC ■ Eidos ■ £29.99

With less bugs and updated player stats, say goodbye both to soap and the real world, and embrace the crack-like phenomenon that is Champ Man. Ugly as a Southgate/Rooney lovechild, mind.

CIVILIZATION III 90%

■ PC ■ Atari ■ £9.99 (Conquest add-on £19.99)

Better than history lessons taught by a page 3 girl, re-write history as it should've been – with YOU in charge. Strategy-wise, it's as deep as it gets.

DISGAEA 88%

■ PS2 ■ Koei ■ £39.99

Ugly and grim sounding yet incredibly well endowed in the gameplay department, this is to console strategy games what Wayne Rooney is to footie.

FAR CRY 91%

■ PC ■ Ubisoft ■ £34.99

Best PC shooter for one-player right now, the lush tropical settings are a real holiday from the usual clichéd blood-spattered gothic settings.

FIGHT NIGHT 2004 89%

■ PS2, Xbox ■ EA ■ £39.99

We expect polished, big licence games from EA, but analog stick punch control is a revelation that'll get more ripped off than a Yank tourist in Soho.

FINAL FANTASY X 88%

■ PS2 ■ Sony ■ £19.99

The first FF for PS2 was a Choco-fanciers wet-dream. Massive and absorbing, the purer levelling up and skills system kicks over-drives up X-2's ass.

FIRE EMBLEM 85%

■ GBA ■ Nintendo ■ £29.99

When battle strategy and role-playing meet, you know the unholy bastard hellspawn of Beelzebub is so addictive it's going to take over your waking life.

F-ZERO GP LEGEND 91%

■ GBA ■ Nintendo ■ £29.99

Old skool looks hide heart-pumpingly tight racing action, complete with new ship tuning and Story Mode options. A real pocket rocket must-have.

F-ZERO GX 91%

■ GameCube ■ Nintendo ■ £39.99

Frantically fast futuristic racer that proves Cube packs some processing punch. It won't make that carry-handle look any less stupid though.

GALLEON 92%

■ Xbox ■ SCi ■ £39.99

Unmissable adventure classic that took a billion years to make. Neat game engine, mental levels, crafty puzzles and class voice acting? Whoop!

GRAND THEFT AUTO DOUBLE PACK 95%

■ PS2, XBOX ■ Rockstar ■ £39.99

Two classics for the price of one, GTA lets you loose in a conrete jungle where anything goes, so long as it's on the wrong side of the law. Slick!

HALO 95%

■ Xbox, PC ■ Microsoft ■ £19.99

Sci-fi shooter that sold the system, two years on and many console shooters are still struggling to come up to par. Worth owning an Xbox just to play.

ONIMUSHA 3 93%

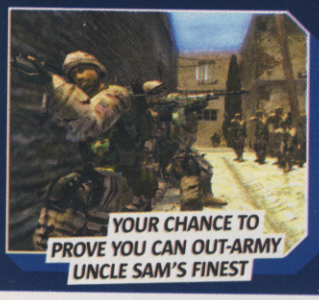
■ PS2 ■ Capcom ■ £39.99

Demon Siege is by far the best in the series, returning to the massively action-oriented and spectacular approach of the original. Boasts stunning visuals, atmospheric score, and slick new features like a crackingly cool power whip in the hands of actor Jean Reno's cop character. The time-bending plot and hero switching with samurai warrior Samanosuke work a treat.

FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR 92%

■ Xbox ■ THQ ■ £39.99

In Vietnam, the average age of US combat troops was nnnnn-nineteen; in Iraq, that seems to be their IQ. Luckily, the AI soldiers in THQ's army seem a whole lot smarter than the real deal, especially with you in charge. This soldiering sim is closer to a real-time strategiser than squad-based shooter. Intense, fantastically realised and dead rewarding, it's an almost flawless experience that's about as close as you're ever likely to want to get to the horrors of war.



MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH!! 86%

■ GameCube ■ Nintendo ■ £39.99

Closer to the N64 than the beloved SNES version, DD tries to be a crowd-pleaser but some players hate its kiddier karts and stretched-out tracks.

MARIO SUNSHINE 92%

■ GameCube ■ Nintendo ■ £19.99

Reinvented platform action thanks to the Ron Jeremy look-alike's new backpack. More magical moments than David Blaine's shazam hands.

METROID PRIME 93%

■ GameCube ■ Nintendo ■ £19.99

Classic platformer melded with first-person shooter into a totally unique-feeling actioner that's perfectly paced, heavily atmospheric and hard!

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SUBSTANCE 81%

■ PS2, Xbox, PC ■ Konami ■ £39.99

Sons Of Liberty gets a remix. Now with more Snake and less of that albino fop. Makes you wonder why they didn't do it right the first time. Helped define the stealth genre, but the plot is quite nuts.

METAL GEAR SOLID: TWIN SNAKES 89%

■ GC ■ Konami ■ £39.99

Snake has snuffed Sons Of Liberty, stolen it's clothes and stuffed the limp corpse of its plot into a foot-locker, time-warping back to his PSone classic.

NBA STREET 2 83%

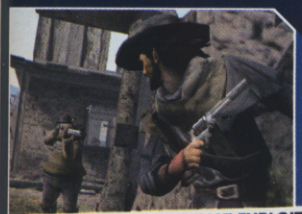
■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ EA Sports ■ £39.99

Basketball goes back to the street... again. Fast, funky, full of neat tricks and fantastic commentary, Street 2 really does capture the feel of the sport perfectly.

RED DEAD REVOLVER 85%

■ Xbox, PS2 ■ Sony ■ £39.99

Rockstar lays on the style in this unusual third-person arcade actioner. You'll need razor-sharp reactions and some smarts to survive. While the structure is fairly linear, Red Dead is rammed with well-executed and original ideas, inventive scenarios and fresh, fast and instinctive action. Plus it's dead easy on the eye too. Throw in some neat modes like Dead Eye and Quick Draw and you've got a strong enough package to forgive it for being a bit short.



AT LAST, A VIDEOGAME THAT EXPLOITS THE POTENTIAL OF WILD WEST MOVIES IN A STYLISH WAY

NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND 91%

■ PS2, Xbox, PC, GameCube ■ EA ■ £39.99

A blinding racer for anyone that loves attaching spinning rims and kitting their motor out with a booming sound system. Everyone, then!

NINJA GAIDEN 93%

■ Xbox ■ Microsoft ■ £39.99

Vast and constantly suprising hack 'em up that's longer and harder than an XL concrete condom. No-skillz gamers need not apply.

POKEMON COLOSSEUM 90%

■ GameCube ■ Nintendo ■ £39.99

Half the planet's gamers want to see the little critters crucified then skinned alive, but the rest will love the new mix of scrapping and adventuring.

PRINCE OF PERSIA: SANDS OF TIME 89%

■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube, PC ■ Ubisoft ■ £39.99

Ace platformer that likes to get all Craig David with a fancy "Can I get a rewind?" time-travel feature.Looks luverly, but a bit short and buggy too.

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3 95%

■ PS2, PC ■ Konami ■ £39.99

Best football game on the planet. What more do you want us to say? Oh yeah... no real players. Well, we've all gotta have some dreams, right?

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 2 93%

■ Xbox ■ Microsoft ■ £39.99

Street racing thrills in sumptuous looking cities with awesome Xbox Live support too. Bit of a slow-burner till you've got some cool cars.

RAINBOW SIX 3 84%

■ PS2, Xbox ■ UbiSoft ■ £39.99

Great squad-based tactical shooter that feels more realistic than other games in this arena. You'll look a twat wearing that headset to talk to people though. PS2's outing is the weakest, too.

RALLISPORT CHALLENGE 2 90%

■ Xbox ■ Microsoft ■ £39.99

Forget the boring techie shite, the emphasis here is on getting behind the wheel and enjoying belting along bumpy roads at insane speeds.

SINGSTAR 81%

■ PS2 ■ Sony ■ £39.99

Either you want to sing songs on your PS2 or you don't. SingStar is glorified karaoke that scores you according to how well you hit notes, so some genuine skills are required. No, honest.

SMASH COURT TENNIS 2 87%

■ PS2 ■ Sony ■ £39.99

Serves up an ace game of arcade style tennis that's dead easy to learn, hard to master but is always utterly addictive. Not much of a looker though.

SOULCALIBUR 2 88%

■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ EA/Nintendo ■ £39.99

Looks great but weak AI makes one-player too easy and the fighting system just isn't deep enough to last in multiplayer. We prefer Virtua Fighter.

SSX 3 85%

■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ EA ■ £39.99

The ultimate boarding thrill-ride, SSX 3 is more open-ended as you wrack up the points exploring three huge mountains looking for the phattest air.

SPLINTER CELL PANDORA TOMORROW 94%

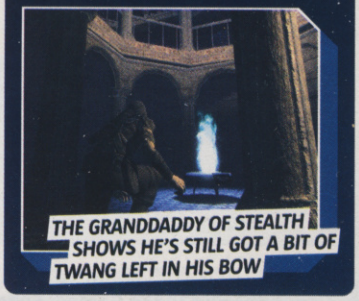
■ Xbox, PC ■ Ubisoft ■ £39.99

Sam slaps on his night-perving goggles and pokes his optic cable into loads more crevices in this stealth sequel masterpiece. Genius multiplayer.

THIEF 3 89%

■ Xbox, PC ■ Eidos ■ £39.99

The world's ugliest game hero returns to fire wake-up arrows up the outside privies of the stealth genre. Simple game mechanics hide astonishing degrees of freedom and depth, while the medieval setting is a neat change from the usual hi-tech terrorism.



THE GRANDDADDY OF STEALTH SHOWS HE'S STILL GOT A BIT OF TWANG LEFT IN HIS BOW

STAR WARS: KOTOR 88%

■ Xbox, PC ■ Activision ■ £39.99

Star Wars gets a AAA game, with cool weapons and skills plus a genius fighting system. More fun than waxing a wookie – but just as beardy.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004 89%

■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube, PC ■ EA Sports ■ £39.99

Someone should have told Siegfried and Roy that there are easier ways to tame a tiger. This is the Gran Turismo of golf games – it's that good!

TIMESPLITTERS 2 91%

■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ Eidos ■ £19.99

Comedy time-travelling shooter with great levels and wicked multiplayer modes. If you loved GoldenEye on N64, snap this up.

TOCA RACE DRIVER 2 91%

■ Xbox, PC ■ Codemasters ■ £39.99

So many different types of racing in one perfectly polished package that feel genuinely different and all genuinely good. A real must-have.

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 79%

■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ Activision ■ £39.99

The weakest game in the series, but Tony's still the chairman of the board when it comes to skating on your console. Made us wish Jackass' Bam Margera would do his own videogame.

VIEWTIFUL JOE 89%

■ GameCube ■ Capcom ■ £39.99

A kung-fu fighting superhero crimefighter with more Bullet Time tricks than the whole Matrix trilogy. Crazy, unique and very cool – viewtiful even!

VIRTUA FIGHTER 4 EVOLUTION 93%

■ PS2 ■ Sega ■ £39.99

Tekken 4? Parp! Virtua Fighter 4 is where the big boys play. This is the current pinnacle of 3D beat 'em ups. Just a pity Akira looks like Peter Andre.

WARIO WARE INC. 88%

■ GBA ■ Nintendo ■ £29.99

Mini-game nirvana in one of the smartest, most devious and addictive games ever. The pleasure of slicing steaks and picking noses is intense, but over too soon.

WWE SMACKDOWN! HCTP 87%

■ PS2 ■ THQ ■ £39.99

The series gets bigger and better each year and now you can play Bra and Panties matches avec the laydeez – it's the best wrestling game ever!

LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER 95%

■ GameCube ■ Nintendo ■ £39.99

Absorbing graphics and captivating gameplay, mini Orlando Bloom Link will pull you in faster than Jordan's yo-yo knickers go up and down.

Do you agree with CVG? If you think there's something missing, write it and let us know. mailbag.cvg@dennis.co.uk

NEW ENTRIES

F-ZERO GP LEGEND
At last, something to break up the Prev Evo and Pandora multiplayer sessions. And best of all, you only need one cart for four-way GBA fun. We like.

SMASH COURT TENNIS 2
Okay, okay, we're not claiming it's better than Top Spin, but it's different enough (and on PS2!) to see us through to Wimbledon.

FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR
We've been watching the news and reckon we can do a better job in Iraq than the US army. After 40 hours of FSW, we KNOW we could.

DROP-OUTS

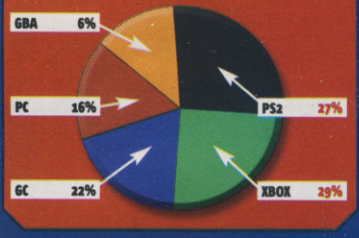
MAX PAYNE 2
Max always was short but sweet, and with no reason to return to it, it's time for the bullet.

TOP SPIN
Ever since release it's never been far from our Xboxes – until Smash Court's sequel arrived.

TRANSFORMERS
A one-month wonder – as in after one month you wonder why you got excited in the first place.

FORMAT FACE-OFF

For the first time ever Xbox overtakes PS2 in CVG's Big 50 chart this month. Here's the full breakdown...



BEST AND WORST OF THE LAST 3MONTHS

Missed an issue of CVG and want to know what the reviews highlights and lowlights were? Here you go...

ISSUE 274

ONIMUSHA 3 DEMON SIEGE	
PS2	93%
PSO III	
GC	78%
.HACK: MUTATION	
PS2	76%
SYPHON FILTER: THE OMEGA STRAIN	
PS2	72%
X-FILES: RESIST OR SERVE	
PS2, XBOX	63%

ISSUE 273

NINJA GAIDEN	
XBOX	93%
GALLEON	
XBOX	92%
HITMAN: CONTRACTS	
PS2, XBOX, PC	78%
CY GIRLS	
PS2	66%
ENGLAND INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL	
PS2, XBOX	56%

ISSUE 272

FAR CRY	
PC	91%
POKEMON COLOSSEUM	
GC	90%
PROJECT ZERO 2	
PS2	86%
METROID: ZERO MISSION	
GBA	84%
GLASS ROSE	
PS2	18%

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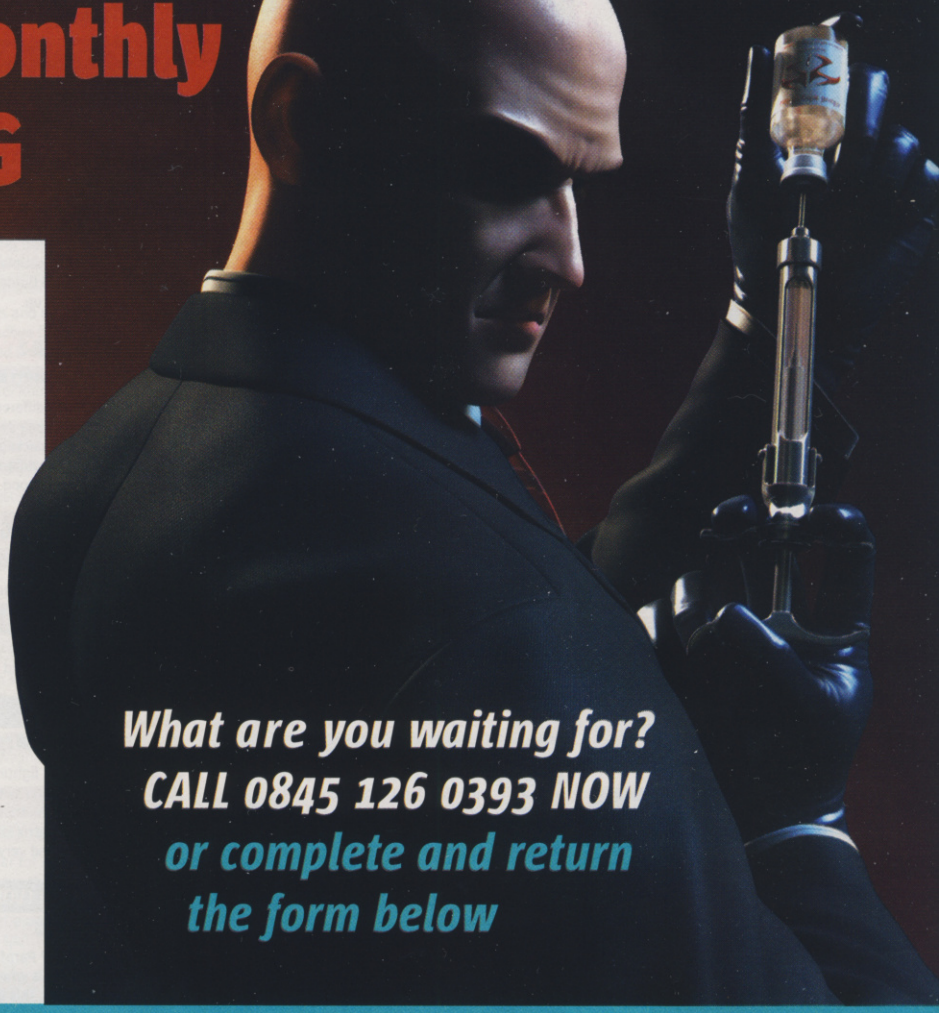

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SMOKIN' CVG PRIZE ATTACK!

DEADLY DRAKENGARD PRIZES!

Fly off with loads of blazin' booty!

Dragons, swords and blood. How can you go wrong with a combination like that? You can't, and that's why we gave Square Enix's red-hot Drakengard a smokin' 81% in CVG 274. Flame-grilling meaty chunks of sword-slashing and dragon-flying and then slapping them in a toasted RPG bun, Drakengard's the kind of fire-snorting adventure we expect from the legendary Final Fantasy developers.

So we've got together with our mates at Gathering and cooked up with the ultimate gaming combo. How does a massive 28" TV, a proper swish limited edition silver PS2, and a copy of the game sound? Well, it'll sound great through the DVD-Dolby 5.1 surround system you'll get as well!

And we've got loads of other goodies including rare-as-dragon eggs concept art books, Drakengard wallets, and nine copies of the game to console the runners-up!

Unsheath your pen, fill in the coupon, and send it to us on the wings of a fiery dragon (or put it in the post, or text it) and you could win these wicked prizes! *

TO WIN: SPOT THE DRAGON...

Drakengard lets you guide hero Caim and his mates through an epic struggle against tyranny.

You twat hordes of enemies with your sword, but things really heat up when you take to the skies. Just tell us which these pics shows Caim roasting baddies on the back of his dragon...

A

You'll have to slash your way through huge hordes of enemies...

B

Deadly weapons and magical attacks help to even up the score...

C

But to really fry ass you've gotta bust out some fiery napalm breath!

WIN ALL THIS!

* **First Prize:** 28" Sanyo TV, DVD player, Sanyo 5.1 Surround Sound System, Limited Edition Silver PS2, copy of Drakengard.
* **Nine Runners-up:** Each receive a copy of Drakengard.

YOU'VE GOT TO BE IN IT TO WIN IT

Tick one of the following boxes

A. ☐ B. ☐ C. ☐

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NURSE CVG'S BIG TIPS

The Surgery is open! Drop your pants and spread your cheeks: Nurse CVG's got tips for yo' ass!

Sexual tension. Surgery's full of it this month. We've got the full rootin' tootin' list of unlockables for Red Dead Revolver, which features a dude with such loaded cohones that he walks bow-legged. Then there's a conspiracy-packed bunch of cheats for X-Files. Here's my prescription for Mulder and Scully: just get on a shag for God's sake, it's been 10 years!

Golf's not usually associated with sex but when Mario and Peach hit the green there's more than just balls being put into cups. And Van Helsing? He likes ladies that suck, so we've staked out some unlockables for you. Plus we got Transformers codes. Have you seen the movie? They're obviously all frustrated batty-bots. Of course, I'm a specialist in relieving sexual frustration. Keep your cheats, hints and tips coming and I'll keep prescribing the good stuff.

Lots of Love, Nurse CVG XXX

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE III

GC

I searched for this one on the internet and ended up on a bit of a dodgy site. Try it for yourself...

By having a save from these games on the card that you save your PSIII data on you will receive bonus game cards.

- *Clippen*
  Billy Hatcher And The Giant Egg data
- *Beat*
  Sonic Heroes data
- *Halloween Rappy*
  Sonic Heroes data
- *Sonic and Knuckles*
  Sonic Heroes data
- *Nano Dragon*
  Phantasy Star Online Episode I & II data
- *Sange*
  Sonic Adventure DX data
- *Rage*
  Sonic Adventure 2 Battle data
- *Madam's Umbrella*
  Sonic Mega Collection data

RED DEAD REVOLVER

PS2

I walked like a cowboy the other day – I'd had a big weapon in my holster. Anyway, here are all the unlockables:

- *Bounty Hunter and Hard Mode*
  Beat the game
- *Redwood revolver and very hard mode*
  Complete the game on hard mode
- *Bite the Bullet*
  Beat Fort Diego on Bounty Hunter mode
- *No HUD*
  Beat the Stagecoach level on Bounty Hunter mode
- *Infinite Deadeye*
  Beat the Battle Finale on Bounty Hunter mode
- *Sad Stars*
  Beat The Mine on Bounty Hunter mode
- *Invincibility*
  Complete the Bounty Hunter goal on Fall from Grace
- *No Distortion*
  Beat End of the Line on Bounty Hunter mode
- *Golden Gun*
  Beat The Siege on Bounty Hunter mode
- *All showdown characters and journal pages*
  Buy every item

VAN HELSING

PS2, XBOX, GBA

Went out with a vampire once, but he sucked. Here's the unlocks!

- *Hard Mode*
  Finish the game on Normal difficulty
- *Unlimited Speed*
  Finish the game on Normal difficulty
- *Unlimited Ammo*
  Finish the game on Hard difficulty
- *Power Clothes*
  Beat the game on any difficulty and finish every level with your hat on
- *The Rifle*
  Beat Netherworld challenges without leaving and find all five Easter Eggs.

GBA

And here's some passwords for the portable bloodsucker:

- *St. Peter's Basilica*
  2S5 M12 111
- *Carriage Battle*
  9C1 P!W LC1
- *Vaseria Village*
  4H@ 5DH 311
- *On the trail of the werewolf*
  65M 5HL 611
- *Valken the werewolf*
  54! 5DV 411
- *Travelling by train*
  3X9 M12 111
- *Dracula's children*
  7BQ *24 8C1
- *Dracula's castle*
  BF1 8KF MC1
- *Dracula finale*
  CG5 B78 *M1
- *Escape from castle*
  8P$ 7D8 KC1
- *Ending Credits*
  DL5 BF3 QM1

Geez... I'm drained now. 'Drained'.

F-ZERO: GP LEGEND

GBA

There are two hidden tracks but to get them you'll have to be lucky. Both turn up by chance when you reach the last race of the Gold Cup – keep playing them and eventually you'll get to race the Illusion tracks!

- *Illusion Track 1*
  Occurs by chance in race 5 of Standard difficulty Grand Prix Gold Cup
- *Illusion Track 2*
  Occurs by chance in race 5 of Expert difficulty Grand Prix Gold Cup

SMASH COURT TENNIS PRO TOURNAMENT 2

PS2

That Kournikova's a right tease – you can always see her camel's toe when she's playing. Check these secrets.

UNLOCKABLE PLAYERS

- *Cassandra Alexandra*
  Finish the Arcade mode with a female

NURSE CVG'S TIP OF THE MONTH

TRANSFORMERS

PS2

Enter these at the Difficulty Select screen when starting a new game. Red Alert will confirm correct entry.

JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED!

AT THE DIFFICULTY SELECT, TAP IN THE FOLLOWING:

- Deep Amazon Complete ..... ◀ ▶ ◀ ▶ ◀ ▶ R1 R2 ●
- Mid Atlantic Complete ..... ● ■ ● ■ ▶ ◀ ◀ ▶
- Alaska Complete ..... R1 ● R1 ■ ◀ ▶ ◀
- Starship Complete ..... ◀ ◀ ▶ ● ● ◀ ▶ ◀
- Earth Complete ..... R2 R1 L1 L2 ■ ● ● ●

AT THE AUTOBOT HQ, TAP IN THE FOLLOWING:

- Infinite stealth, (Must have Covert minicon equipped) ..... ▲ ▲ ▼ ▼ L1 L2 L1 L2
- Infinite Powerlink ..... ▲ ▼ ▲ ▼ ● ■ ● ●
- Big Head Mode ..... ● ● ● ■ L1 L1 L1 L2
- Turbo Mode ..... L1 R2 R2 ■ ■ ■ ■ L1

player in Pro difficulty setting

Heihachi Mishima
Finish the Arcade mode with a male player in Challenger difficulty setting

Ling Xiaoyu
Finish the Arcade mode with a female player in Challenger difficulty setting

Raphael Sorel
Finish the Arcade mode with a male player in Pro difficulty setting

MARIO GOLF: TOADSTOOL TOUR

GC

Golf's all about having a good grip on the shaft. You'd think I'd be good at it...

Hold Z and Start at the title screen, and then go to password tournaments and enter these codes:

UNLOCKABLE TOURS

Bowser Badlands Tour
9L3L9KHR

Bowser Jr.'s Jumbo Tournie
2GPL67PN

Camp Hyrule Tournament
0EKW5G7U

Hollywood Video Tour
BJGQBULZ

Peach's Castle Grounds Course
ELBUT3PX

Super Mario Open
GGAA241

Target Tour Tournament
CEUFPXJ1

UNLOCKABLE GREENS

Cheep Cheep Falls T. Greens
Win Cheep Cheep Star Tournament

Lakitu Valley T. Greens
Win Lakitu Star Cup

Bowser Badlands T. Greens
Win Bowser Star Championship

Peach's Castle Grounds T. Greens
Win Peach's Star Invitational

Shifting Sands T. Greens
Win Sands Star Classic

Blooper Bay T. Greens
Win Blooper Star Open

THE X-FILES: RESIST OR SERVE

PS2

I saw an special episode where Mulder and Scully did knock boots. I think it was called The XXX-Files. Enter these at the Cheats screen:

One Hit Kills
● L2 ↓ R1 ✕

Infinite Ammo
L1 L2 ✕ R2 R1

Unlock All Bonus Features
● R1 L1 ↓ ●

Unlock All Levels
R2 → L2 ↑ ■

Invincibility
↑ ■ ● ✕ ↓

SERIOUS SAM: NEXT ENCOUNTER

PS2, GC

Press X on the level select screen to access the Lost Levels screen. These are unlocked by winning gold medals in the main game.

Ancient Rome – Addressing the Senate .....9 Golds
Ancient Rome – Caesar's Sanctum .....12 Golds
Ancient Rome – Praetorian Camp .....3 Golds
Ancient Rome – The Forum of Trajan .....7 Golds
Ancient Rome – The Forum Romanum .....5 Golds
Feudal China – The Gate of Supreme Harmony .....18 Golds
Feudal China – Silk Road .. 15 Golds
Legendary Atlantis – The Corridors of Power .....26 Golds
Legendary Atlantis – The Geothermal Tunnels .....24 Golds
Legendary Atlantis – Steam Tower .. ..22 Golds

SONIC ADVANCE 3

GBA

I've scraped together loads of Sonic secrets from this dead hedgehog I found on the road. There was some great stuff amongst the intestines.

Secret Stage Mode
Complete all seven special stages, then, on the main menu, press Up, R, Down, L, Right, Left

Sound Test
Beat the final zone

Unlock Amy
Use Sonic as your leader, then complete Zone 4 Act 3

Unlock Bosses in Time Attack
Get Gold Medals for every level and boss, then defeat Nonaggression

Unlock Cream
Use Sonic as your leader then beat Zone 6 Act 3

Knuckles
Use Sonic as your leader then beat Zone 2 Act 3

TOP 20 TIPS

EVERY BEST-SELLER TIPPED!

1 UEFA EURO 2004
PS2, PC, XBOX

Take advantage of the new moves, especially the fake shot. Use it and you'll break any defender's ankles!

2 POKÉMON COLOSSEUM
GC

Beat the Tower colosseum in single and double battle modes to unlock the Level 100 Colosseum battles.

3 HITMAN: CONTRACTS
PS2, PC, XBOX

During gameplay, press R2 L2 ↑ ↓ ✕ L3 ● ✕ ● ✕ to complete the mission with a silent assassin rating.

4 NORTON INTERNET SECURITY 2004
PC

Yikes, they're multiplying! That Norton bloke must be minted...

5 NINJA GAIDEN
XBOX

Complete the game with the original Ninja Gaiden in your inventory to unlock the original Ninja Gaiden II.

6 VAN HELSING
PS2, XBOX

Beat the game on hard mode to unlock unlimited ammo.

7 THE SUFFERING
PS2

Hold R1 L1, and ✕, and press ↑ → ↑ → ↑ → to get a new family picture.

8 FIGHT NIGHT 2004
PS2, XBOX

Press ← ← ← → → → ← → → on the main menu to unlock all of the venues.

9 TRANSFORMERS
PS2

Pause the game and enter in ■ ● ■ ● L1 L1 L2 L1 to kill any enemy with one shot.

10 SONIC HEROES
PS2, XBOX, GC

You'll need to collect a total of 60 emblems to unlock the two-player ring race mode.

11 SINGSTAR
PS2

You don't need to sing the actual words – humming in tune can nail a higher score. And a top tip when playing with someone you really fancy – try not to look like too much of a twat.

12 RALLISPORT CHALLENGE 2
XBOX

Hit the right analog stick to honk your horn at any time.

13 FIFA 2004
PS2, XBOX, GC, PC

Get level 10 in the EA bio to unlock the French League third kits.

14 007: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING
PS2, GC, XBOX

Earn 230 points in multiplayer mode to unlock the Moscow guard as a bonus character.

15 THE SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN
XBOX, PS2, GC

In the living room screen, hold the shoulder buttons and press this code to jump whenever you honk the horn.
GC: X, X, X, Y. **PS2:** ■ ● ● ▲. **XBOX:** X, X, X, Y.

16 NORTON ANTIVIRUS 2004
PC

Another month, another shedload of Norton Antivirus sold to boring men with beards.

17 TOCA RACE DRIVER 2
XBOX, PS2

If your disc is code number 2316, enter in CPWIUKRA at the secrets screen to unlock every car and championship.

18 NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND
PS2, XBOX, GC

At the main menu, enter in ↓ R1 R1 R1 R2 R2 R2 ■ to unlock all of the circuit tracks.

19 TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW
XBOX, PC, PS2

As the mercenary, always remember to keep an eye on your location – if you get attacked by the spy, immediately tell your partner where you are.

20 LMA MANAGER 2004
PS2

Enter in your name as LMA2004A when starting a new game to unlock a selection of bonus codes.

SHOW US YOUR TIPS!

CVG GAMERS FLASH THEIR HOT SECRETS AT NURSE CVG

I'm hot. In fact, I'm absolutely sweltering. My latex outfit is great for wiping mucky bodily fluids off, but it's a right bugger when the sun's shining.

Anyway, I mention my hotness because summer's here, temperatures are rising, and you need plenty of tips to keep your cool. That's why Show Us Your Tips is applying chilled Harry Potter, X-Files and Full Spectrum Warrior flannels to your forehead, and my First Aid kit is full of rehydrating Thief and Zelda: Four Swords strategies. Be like me: strip off, feel the heat, and beat the game.

Lot of love, Nurse CVG xxx

NURSE RATING 5

RAINBOW SIX 3

XBOX

NURSE RATING 4

I've got a couple of great codes for Rainbow Six 3 on Xbox. To get infinite health tap in Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right on the D-pad then press B and A while you're playing. Doesn't work on Live, though. And if you want to shoot lasers instead of bullets (and who doesn't?) tap in Up, Down, Up, Down then press zoom twice.

John, text

CVG I like that game – it's not the first time I've played with four soldiers at once.

HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN

XBOX

NURSE RATING 3

Here's how to get invulnerability on the Xbox version of Azkaban. At the main menu press Up, Left, Down, Left, Right on the D-pad then press Black, Black and White. That's magic!

Matt, Bournemouth

CVG I could teach that Harry Potter a few tricks with wiggling his wand...

X-FILES: RESIST OR SERVE

PS2

The truth is out there. Actually, it's right here, 'cos I've got loads of cheats for the X-Files:

✷ *All acts unlocked*
Enter R2 ➡ L2 ⬆ ● at the Cheats menu

✷ *All bonus features unlocked*
Enter ⬅ R1 L1 ⬇ ● at the Cheats menu

✷ *Unlimited first aid kits*
Type in the Chris Barnes code first while making the optical disc in Episode 2 and you'll get a first aid kit. You can do it as many times as you like!

NURSE RATING 3

Chris, email

CVG Mulder and Scully again, eh? You can't get enough of them.

KATAMARI DAMACY

PS2

NURSE RATING 2

Here's how to unlock the awesome Eternal Stages:

✷ *Eternal Stage 1*
Reach 1m32cm3mm in Make a Star 4.

✷ *Eternal Stage 2*
Reach 25m in Make a Star 8.

✷ *Eternal Stage 3*
800m in Make the Moon.

CVG I love big balls, me.

ONIMUSHA 3

PS2

I know you've already done Oni 3 stuff, but I've found some new secrets. If you have Ako's White Vest equipped you can rotate the right analog stick to replenish your energy much faster. To find the awesome Bishamon Sword, go to the save point at the bottom of the temple stairs before you fight Nobunaga. Look up to the left and you'll see the mental hanging man and if you move closer you'll be transported to the Demon World. Find eight Orbs, open the chest, and the Bishamon Sword is yours!

NURSE RATING 4

CVG Stick twiddling and big, powerful swords? Just how I like it.

QUICKIES WITH THE NURSE

GHOST RECON: JUNGLE STORM

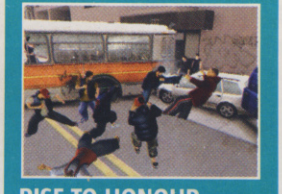
PS2

✷ *Unlock all missions*
Pause the game and enter R1 R1 R1 R1 ✕ ● then L1 and L2 together.

LMA MANAGER 2004

PS2, XBOX

✷ *Start with £500,000,000*
Enter LMA2004MEUFBZ as your name if your disc is code 4619.



RISE TO HONOUR

PS2

✷ *Invincibility*
Pause the game and press L2 L3 R3 L2 L2 L1 L3 L2.

LIFE SAVER

RED DEAD REVOLVER

PS2

Make like Clint Eastwood in the Good, The Bad and The Ugly and play Red Dead as the Man With No Name. When you start a new game enter your name as a single space so nothing shows up. When you accept this the file will call itself Rstar and you'll start the game with a randomly selected bunch of unlockables at your disposal!

Shane, email

CVG Red Dead's been really popular this month. Not surprising: I love a man who knows how to ride.

Grab yourself a fistful of randomly selected unlockables with this wicked cheat

FLATLINER

FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR

PS2

Play Full Spectrum Warrior as it was intended for the US Army. At the Code Input screen enter ha2p1py9tur5tle. It's rock hard, so to help you through use these codes:

CHEAT	CODE
Big Head Mode	NICKWEST
Unlimited Ammo	MERCENARIES

Shaman, email

CVG Great codes, but that's too hardcore even for me!

NURSE RATING 1

Erm, maybe I'm missing something here but aren't cheats supposed to make it EASIER?

CVG FIRST AID KIT

Ask Nurse CVG to help out – she'd love to take you in hand

DRAKENGARD

PS2

Get your fit ass over here and help me out with Drakengard!

J, email

CVG *Since you're so polite...*

Attack through walls
Just use your run attack and when you hit full speed you'll be able to strike bad guys even if they're behind a barrier!

Unlock the Jet
Sod dragons, ride a fully tooled-up jet fighter instead! Beat the Free Mission at Shinjuku after Chapter 13, then on the dragon select screen press down on Chaos Dragon and choose ???. It's a big bloody jet!

INSTANT GAMING RELIEF

MARIO GOLF: TOADSTOOL TOUR

GC

Do you have any hints or unlockables for Mario Golf?

Jim, Sunderland

CVG *Do I ever. I love swinging, especially when Mario and Peach are involved...*

Unlock Hole in One contest
Hold Z and push Start at the title screen

Unlock Boo
Get 50 Best Badges in Tournament Mode

Unlock Bowser Jr.
Get a Birdie or better on all 18 holes of the Birdie Challenge Side Game

Unlock Petey Pirahna
Complete Putting, Approach, and Shot Practice at all three difficulties in Side Games

Unlock Shadow Mario
Complete Ring mode

Star characters
Beat that character in Character Match mode. A star character hits much further than regulars

Control weather
The weather randomly changes every time you reload a saved game

Mushrooms
Hitting mushrooms at Peach's Invitational will ping the ball into the air

Warp pipes
Look for Warp Pipes that will take your ball much further

GAMING PAINS PATCHED UP

THIEF: DEADLY SHADOWS

XBOX

I'm struggling to get my life of crime off the ground in Thief 3. Any tips?

Tim, Reading

CVG *I don't like nickers. Actually, I don't like knickers either. Maybe you noticed that last month. Anyway, Matt 'Prince of' Wales is our resident sticky-fingerer, and he offered these tips:*

Ultimate Hiding Spots
The portals that take you between separate areas of the map are brilliant places to hide because they're so dark. Just select to stay in the area and then hang about in the smoky gloom!

Thick as Thieves
After Day 3 you can start making friend with the Hammerites and Pagans. It's worth it because they won't attack you and let you hide on their turf. To befriend the Hammerites kill the cockroaches and the undead roaming the city. To befriend the Pagans find the green Trickster stones or shoot their Elemental Arch with Elemental arrows.

Nightvision
Raise the Gamma/ Brightness in Options!

THIS MONTH'S KISS OF LIFE

LEGEND OF ZELDA: FOUR SWORDS ADVENTURES

GC, GBA

My claw-handed mates and I haven't seen the light of day since my import copy of Four Swords arrived. We've noticed people on the internet speaking about a few glitches and secrets built into the game but haven't been able to track any down. Got any you can chuck our way?

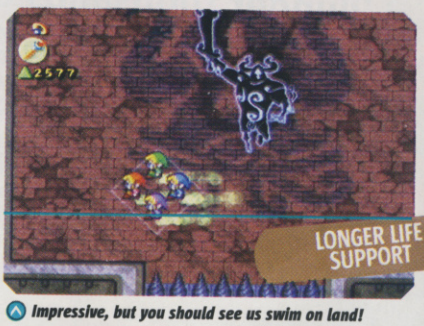
Pete, Chiswick

CVG *Pork swords? That sounds like an interesting departure for the series. How is Princess Zelda involved in this? Oh sorry, FOUR SWORDS. Right. Funny, I think I preferred the first one...*

These are all glitches we found in Four Swords. Some are useful, some are just there for a bit of fun or to impress your mates:

INTENSIVE CVG CARE

With odds like these, a little 'exploiting' is in order



LONGER LIFE SUPPORT

Impressive, but you should see us swim on land!

Diggin' It
You can dig extra fast by throwing your Magic Boomerang, switching to your Shovel, then starting to dig.

Backwards Boomerang
You can chuck the Boomerang behind you by pressing in the opposite direction to which you are facing at exactly the same time you throw it.

Sprinty Sprinty
Run super-fast by using the Flute and, just before the Duck picks you up, start to dash with the Pegasus Boots. Press B when asked for a destination, and when you hit the deck you'll be running faster than a doped-up sprinter!

Keep on Jumpin'
Do the super-fast run trick and run into a wall. If you keep holding up you'll climb the wall as if you're flying!

Walkin' Sideways
You can walk on stairs sideways or backwards by holding B as you climb or descend them.

Dry Swimming
You can swim on land once you've got Zora's Flippers. Stand right next to water then call the Duck with your Flute and cancel out of the destination selection with B. Now when you move you'll be swimming on land!

Walking on Water
Jump into water while holding a Cucco and the wee bugger will make like Jesus and walk on water!

SURGERY IS ALWAYS OPEN!

We've heard you've got a massive tip hidden away. Why be shy? Whip it out and let Nurse CVG get a look at it! Don't worry, she's a professional and will handle it with care. SEND YOUR TIPS, CHEATS, STRATEGIES AND QUESTIONS TO...

TEXT 4 TIPS

TEXT YOUR TIP TO: **83125**

(SAME FOR T-MOBILE USERS)

How to enter: first type 'CVG TIPS' and then enter your hint, tip or strategy. Make sure you tell us the name of the game and what format the tip is for!

TEXTS COST 50P PLUS STANDARD OPERATING CHARGE. SEE PAGE 64 FOR TERMS & CONDITIONS.

CVGTIPS@DENNIS.CO.UK

TEXT TO WIN

TEXT YOUR ANSWERS TO: **83125**

(SAME FOR T-MOBILE USERS)

How to enter: first type 'CVG GALLEON' and then the letter matching your answer. Eg: 'CVG GALLEON B'*

*TEXTS COST 50P PLUS STANDARD OPERATING CHARGE

Plunder thousands of pounds' worth of pirate prizes including a stunning LCD TV!

Yo-ho, yo-ho, a pirate's life for me! Think about it: pirates rule! They rule the high seas! Basically, they sail around absolutely minging from drinking super-strength rum, nick some stuff, bury it on really nice beaches, then go and cop off with fit wenches in sun-drenched ports!

That's part of the reason we really got Captain Hooked on SCi's Galleon. The pukka pirate game's hero, Captain Rhama, isn't just a beer-swilling, lady-killing badass: he's also a proper acrobatic wizard, leaping and sprinting all over Galleon's huge gameworld like he's got crabs in his pants. In fact, we loved it so much we awarded it a stonking 92% in CVG 273 and draped a studly Gold Award round it's neck. That's why we were delighted when our hearties at SCi shot a cannon across our bow and told us they wanted to hook you lot up with some truly awesome booty.

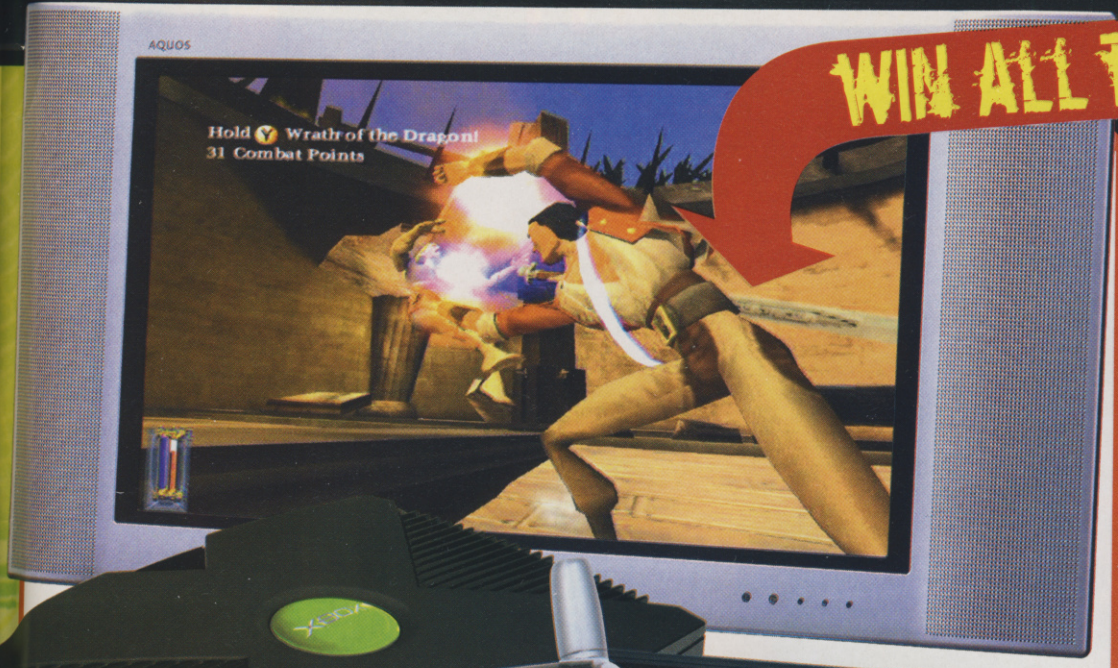
Forget those normal, boring TVs – if you win this compo you'll scoop a state of the art, seriously sexy 22" LCD flatscreen TV! It's over £1,300 worth of telly, and it'll look even better when you hook up your new Xbox to it and play your copy of Galleon!

Then you can call your mates up on your sweet new Motorola phone complete with the Galleon Dawn mobile game, and invite them round to drool over your truly unique Galleon artwork signed by Toby Gard, the dude who created Lara Croft and Galleon!

What're ya waitin' for, ya lily-livered land lubber? Get the question answered, send in the coupon or drop us a text, and do it double quick or you'll be walking the plank! Yar!

X MARKS THE X-ELLENT GALLEON BOUNTY!

WIN ALL THIS!



PIECES OF CVG GR-EIGHT PRIZES!

* **One lucky pirate plunders:** Sharp Aquos 22" LCD TV, Xbox, Copy of Galleon on Xbox, Motorola V600 mobile phone, Galleon: Dawn Java game, Galleon artwork signed by Toby Gard

* **Ten Runners-Up:** Sail off with a copy of Galleon on Xbox and a copy of Galleon: Dawn Java game

PLAY GALLEON DAWN ON YOUR PHONE!

You don't need to be stuck ashore to play Galleon – if you live life on the ocean waves you can still kick ass as Rhama by playing Galleon Dawn on your mobile phone. Whoop!

The great news is that it works on any mobile phone that supports Java games, and looks especially cool on the Motorola V600 you could win if you enter the competition!

TO WIN: SPOT CAPTAIN RHAMA'S BOOTY!

When you're as goddamn good-looking as Captain Rhama you never have to walk the plank (it's rhyming slang) 'cos there's always loads of wenches letting you touch their booty.

All you gotta do is tell us which of these pics shows Rhama getting down to some rugged rough-seas lady lovin'!

A

Don't know about a dead man's chest, but I wouldn't mind a look at her's...

B

It's not all swashbuckling – Rhama can bust out some hardcore pirate magic...

C

Or go bareknuckle on playa-haters who want to bring the drama

YOU'VE GOT TO BE IN IT TO WIN IT

Tick one of the following boxes

A☐ B.☐ C.☐

*TITLE: .....

*FORENAME: .....

*SURNAME: .....

*ADDRESS: .....

.....

*POSTCODE: .....

*DAYTIME TELEPHONE NO: .....

*EMAIL: .....

Send you entries to: Computer And Video Games, CCVG408C, Dennis Publishing, PO Box 154, Bradford, BD1 5RZ

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How to enter: first type 'CVG DRIVER' and then the letter matching your answer. Eg: 'CVG DRIVER B'*

*TEXTS COST 50P PLUS STANDARD OPERATING CHARGE

Virgin megastores ATARI

Power-slide your way to the ultimate prize pile up!

EEEEEAaaaaaarrrr! Neeeeeowwww! SCRREEEEEEEE! NEEE-NAW NEEE-NAW NEEE-NAW! KERUNCH!

That's about as close to the sound of a car chase as we can get in words. Rubbish, right? Luckily there's nothing pathetic about riding shotgun with a speeding motor as it shoots down narrow streets, slides through rush-hour traffic, and shakes the cops like a Polaroid picture.

And that's what Atari's Driv3r is all about – sticking you behind the wheel and letting you feel the rush. Plus, it's stacked out with enough editing options to turn your game footage into wheel-spinning, Oscar-winning masterpieces!

So when the dudes at Atari and Virgin Megastores wanted to offer CVG readers the ultimate car chase prize we just had to hook you up. One lucky winner will speed off with a PS2, a copy of Driv3r, 10 classic car chase movies on DVD, and a Digital Video camera. That's a whole lotta loot!

So floor your accelerator and send or text us your answer: the heat's coming down and you better make a quick getaway.*

TO WIN: SPOT THE DRIV3R CAR CHASE FRESH FROM THE CAMERAS!

One of the coolest things about Driv3r is editing the action into red-hot chase scenes. One of these screens shows the Director Mode in all its powerful Spielberg-esque glory, but do you have enough cinematic vision to spot it? Check it out...

A

Tanner isn't just a Driver – he handy with a shooter as well

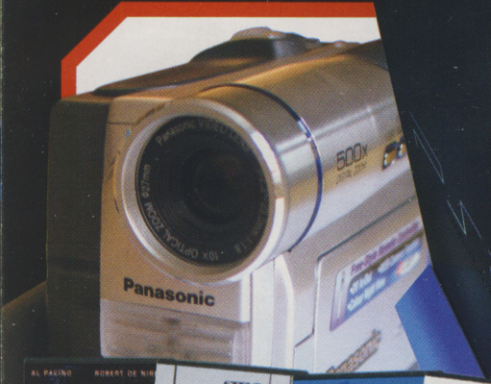
B

The action takes you from the sun-bleached streets of Miami to Nice and Istanbul

C

But it's the Director Mode's awesome editing power that really steals the s

WIN ALL THIS!



* **One winner roars off with:** A PlayStation 2, Panasonic NV-DS65B Digital Camcorder, A copy of Driv3r and ten classic car chase movies on DVD (Including: The Blues Brothers, Bullitt, Cannonball Run boxset, Heat, Ronin and Smokey and the Bandit boxset.
* **Four runners-up:** y'all escape with a copy of Driv3r on either PS2 or Xbox.

YOU'VE GOT TO BE IN IT TO WIN IT

Tick one of the following boxes

A. ☐ B. ☐ C. ☐

★TITLE: .....

★FORENAME: .....

★SURNAME: .....

★ADDRESS: .....

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★POSTCODE: .....

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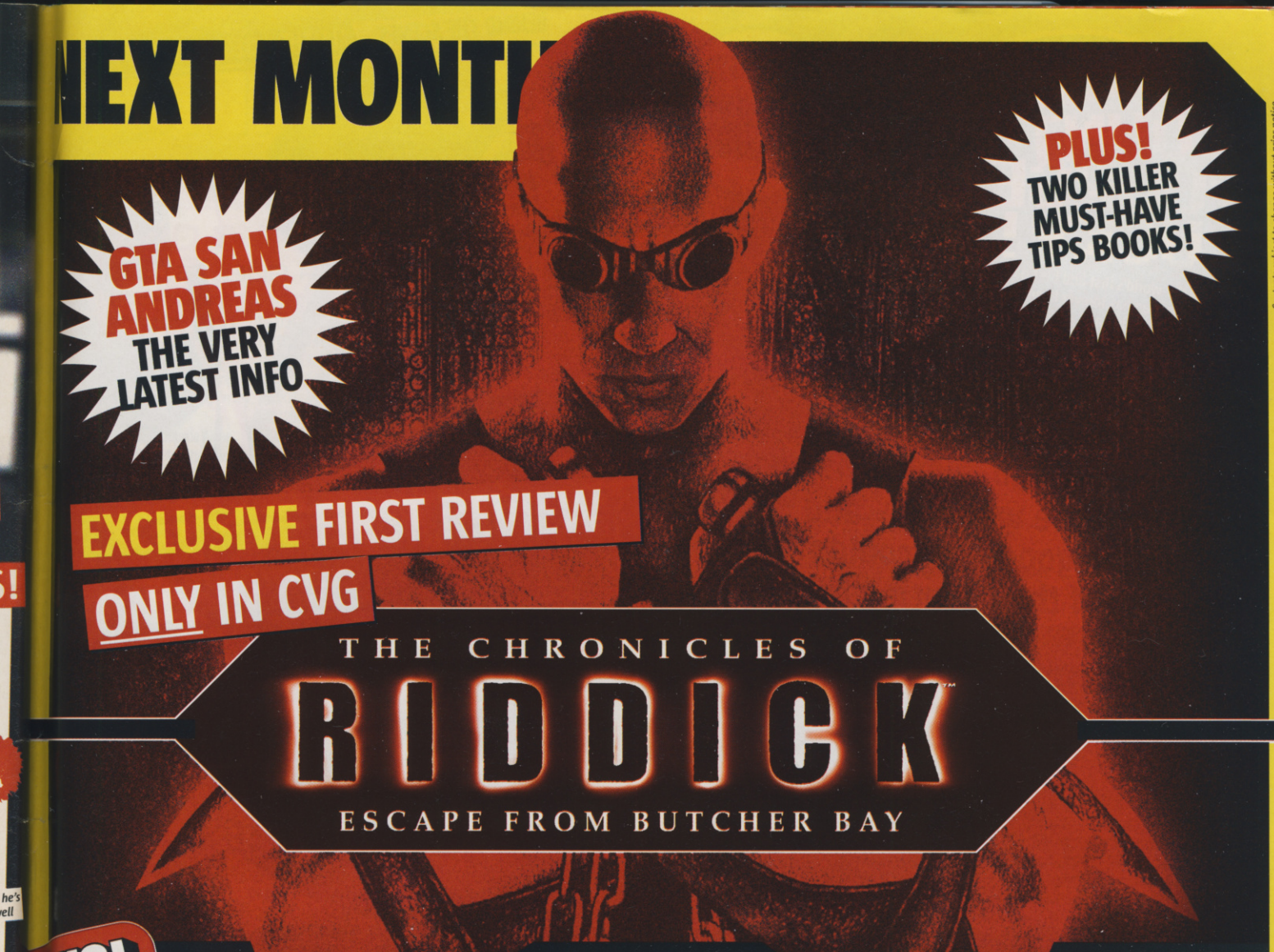
NEXT MONTH



GTA SAN ANDREAS
THE VERY LATEST INFO

PLUS!
TWO KILLER MUST-HAVE TIPS BOOKS!

Contents subject to change without prior notice

EXCLUSIVE FIRST REVIEW
ONLY IN CVG

THE CHRONICLES OF
RIDDICK™
ESCAPE FROM BUTCHER BAY

PLUS!
STACKS OF PREVIEWS!

TOTAL CLUB MANAGER 2005

HANDS-ON! Can EA change the way that we look at footie management games two years on the trot?

DEAD RUSH

PLAYED IT! High speed House Of The Dead on wheels. Drive fast, shoot zombies in the head. Sounds like a good plan to us!

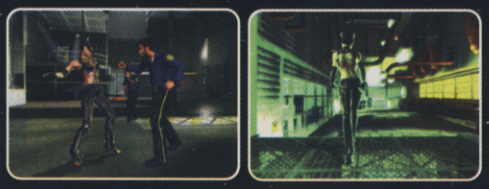
RAINBOW SIX 3: BLACK ARROW

FIRST LOOK! All-new stand-alone add-on for Xbox's most popular tactical shooter. All-new info and screenshots

PLUS!
SUPERHEROES RATED!

SPIDER-MAN 2

The Sticky One's been pretty elusive till now, but we've got him and his new movie tie-in cornered and ready to rate!



CATWOMAN

We may be wrong but we reckon the movie's gonna stink. Hopefully the game won't, but if Halle's in it it's worth a look

FRONT MISSION 4

More mech-based strategy mayhem. It's kinda like Advance Wars only on PS2 and it's gotta to be good 'cos it's number 4, right?

PLUS!
MORE PREVIEWS AND REVIEWS! Mercenaries, Brothers In Arms, Call Of Duty: Finest Hour, Ghost Recon 2, Rocky Legends, Star Wars: Battlefront, Soldiers: Heroes Of World War II, Second Sight (yes, again, it's that good!), Area 51, PlayBoy: The Mansion and a whole fat load more!

BRINGING YOU ALL THE HOTTEST GAMING INFO EVERY MONTH. ON SALE 29 JULY

COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES
CVG

5 YEARS AGO

COUNT YOURSELF LUCKY!

CVG is the world's first and best games magazine. But while the mag has forever been a class act, games haven't always been as good as they are today...

1999

ISSUE 209

computer and video games

£1.50 GREAT VALUE

Five years ago, publishers were masking tripe with tits – and even the good stuff couldn't escape the curse of the bouncing bristols

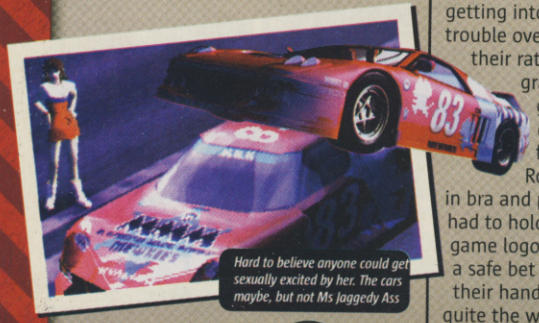
Take a gander at the gleaming chrome babe-magnet on the front of this month's CVG then cast a glance at the squiggly mess of motors we had on the cover five years ago – it looks to us like someone from Care in the Community went crazy with the Crayolas at lunchtime. But hey, you can only work with what art you're given. Besides, it's a nice visual metaphor for why you're a million times better off with today's turbo-charged racers.

RIDGE-RAISING RACING

Delve into the mag and you see we were going gaga over Ridge Racer Type 4. We might've sprayed our control pads with sticky globs of excitement over it's high-octane arcade thrills, but would you still want to be driving cars around that look like inflatable Thunderbird rejects?

Okay, the recent R:Racing played like a dog, but we'd take its leading lady's jumpsuit-busting puppies over RR 4's spindly legged, squared hipped polygon pouter any day. That girl had so many jaggies that getting too close when she sprung her shoebox norks would take your ears off.

At least Ridge Racer had the gameplay to support its massive knockers – elsewhere software houses were getting into trouble over their rather gratuitous growler ad campaigns. Dodgy fighting dirge, Bloody Roar, boasted a full-page lass in bra and panties so tight she literally had to hold herself in while the tiny game logo looked lost in the corner. It's a safe bet gamers weren't wrapping their hands around their joypads in quite the way the developers wanted.



LIZARD OF LURVE

The lamer the game, the more likely it'd turn up sporting a double D-cup and not much else. Take adverts for Gex – a naff 3D platform game fronted by a six foot reptile in a dinner jacket (a mascot character with even less charisma than Ahmed in the BB5 house). The ads played it safe by getting the scaly one to nuzzle up with a busty blonde piece-packing bimbo. Thank god we're not so bloody gullible these days though...um, anyone else rush out to buy FFX-2 on the strength of those telly ads?

One company that might have learned a thing or two from all this mammary marketing was Sega. Issue 209 saw us on the brink of an aneurysm – we were whipping ourselves into such a frothy frenzy over the upcoming Dreamcast.

In retrospect, the fact it looked like a foot spa with a CD drive should've tipped us off, but just five months before its European launch, all its talk of online gaming, DVD upgrades and hard-drive add-ons had us wetter than a mermaid riding the spin-cycle. Even readers were gripped in a Sega seizure, voting it top of the Most Wanted charts – THREE places above Sony's PS2.

STROKED UP

Still, with CVG slathering over the specs of Sony's next-gen Emotion Engine, it's no surprise the white wonder flopped faster than a session of vinegar strokes when your mum walks in.

All that techno-babble about polygons per second, Bezier Surfacing and NURBS still has us head-scratching, but if bigging up the system's natural curve abilities was supposed to subliminally suggest we'd be seeing the last of Tomb Raider III's ham-shaped hooters, then boy, did it work.

Hormones, eh? ✷

COUNT YOURSELF LUCKY

Think you're being stiffed by Nintendo's constant regurgitation of SNES games for the GBA? At least they're classics – when the Gameboy Color appeared, publishers were churning out any old crap to con gamers. Super Breakout in ten exciting on-screen colours, anyone?

BEST GAME #209

STREET FIGHT ALPHA 3: 5/5

The lush cartoon visuals and frenzied fighting action practically had the CVG team falling over their five-fingered rating system to recommend this one – 'cos, you know, you can have all sorts of fun with five fingers

WORST GAME #209

KENSEI: SACRED FIST: 2/5

In a month of relentless shite, it's hard to pick out a clear winner for worst game. Any cack-handed 3D fighter that struggles to come up with a name more fearsome than "David" for its lead is up there in our book though

funk up your fone

UPDATE UR MOBY WITH THE LATEST TONES AND GRAPHICS

MONO & POLYPHONIC RINGTONES

UPDATE YOUR PHONE WITH A ROCKING NEW TONE!

For polyphonics, phone must be wap enabled. For compatibility see below

CHART TONES	MONO	POLY
Eamon - F**k It	149031	147890
Christina Milian - Dip It Low	151002	146307
Natasha Bedingfield - Single	151003	149891
Keane - Everybody's Changing	151004	149329
Ronan/ Leann - Last Thing On My..	151005	150811
D12 - My Band	149725	149355
Anastacia - Left Outside Alone	149210	149132
The Rasmus - In the Shadows	149400	146287
Maroon 5 - This Love	149900	149086
Streets - Fit But You Know It	150262	149334
Usher - Yeah	148960	146155
Busted - Air Hostess	150261	149304
Ash - Orpheus	151006	149893
Gunther /S'shine Girls-Ding Dong	151007	150092
Special D - Come With Me	149401	146306
McFly - 5 Colours In Her Hair	149257	149265
DJ Casper - Cha Cha Slide	148623	148627
Lostprophets - Wake Up Make a..	151008	151010
Boogie Pimps - Sunny	150264	149375
Gabrielle - Stay the Same	151009	151011
DANCE	**MONO**	**POLY**
Gia - Despina Vandi	140279	138348
Good Luck - Basement Jaxx	146054	143730
So Confused - 2play Ft Raghav	146159	146160
Somebody To Love-Boogie Pimps	144376	117101
Born Slippy Nuxx - Underworld	126478	116975
Fly On The Wings Of - Xtm & Dj	116215	118500
Make Luv - Room 5	111639	111643
Boys Of Summer - Dj Sammy	110321	110627
Logical Song - Scooter	102313	107043
Weekend - Scooter	112641	112592
Ur A Superstar - Love Inc	109977	107822
Rubberneckin - Elvis Presley	124657	124635
Who Said - Planet Funk	122492	121696
All In My Head - Kosheen	121730	121533
Golden Path -Chemical Brothers	124545	124338
Husan -Bhangra Knights	116956	116678

FOOTBALL	MONO	POLY
Arsenal - Vi-erra	122960	122961
Arsenal - Amazing Reds	122962	122963
Aston Villa -Holteenders In The Sky	122964	122965
Aston Villa - Roll Along	122966	122967
Chelsea - Blue Is The Colour	122984	122985
Chelsea - Super Franky Lampard	122986	122987
Chelsea - We are the famous CFC	122988	122989
Everton - He was Just 17	122990	122991
Everton - You Are My Everton	122992	122993
Leeds - We Had Joy	122998	122999
Liverpool - You'll Never Walk Alone	123006	123007
Liverpool - We All Live In A Red..	123008	123009
Man City - Blue Moon	123012	123013
Man United - Our Trophy Back	123016	123017
Man United - The Great Escape	123018	123019
Middlesborough - Boro Till I Die	123024	123025
Newcastle Utd - Blaydon Races	123026	123027
Newcastle Utd - 1 Alan Shearer	123028	123029
Southampton - Mr Eriksson	123034	123035
Southampton - When The Saints	123036	123037
Glory Glory	123038	123039
Spurs - We Are Tottenham	123040	123041
Wolves - King Kenny Miller	123042	123043
Wolves -Hey Jones 'E'	123044	123045
There's Only One....	123048	123049
We've Got That Double Feeling	123052	123053
Here We Go	123056	123057
Match Of The Day	123058	123059
OLD SKOOL	**MONO**	**POLY**
Let Me Be Your Fantasy - Baby D		- 116148
Rappers Delight - Sugarhill Gang	111774	111849
Hanging On A String - Loose Ends	111755	111830
Gotta Have Your Love - Mantronix	111764	111839
Cant Hide Your Love - David Joseph	111734	111809
All Night Long - Mary Jane Girls	111779	111854
Kiss From A Rose - Seal	100078	108564
Gonna Go My Way - Lenny Kravitz		- 109352

TOP SELLERS	MONO	POLY
Where Is The Luv - Black Eyed Ps	120393	121454
Fields Of Athenray	100381	108273
2 + 2 = Radiohead	143300	126719
Halloween theme	100048	109159
Superstar- Jamelia	124982	125020
Lose Yourself - Eminem	138518	107810
X Gon Give It Ya - Dmx	101360	116167
Skater Boi - Avril Lavigne	108011	110068
You're A Superstar - Love Inc	109977	107822
Pass That Dutch - Missy Elliott	143849	126080
Pink Panther theme	100632	107771
Bat Out Of Hell - Meatloaf	100343	119445
Come Undone - Robbie	112605	115736
Breathe - Blu Cantrell	120539	120508
Xtm & Dj Chucky -On The Wings	116215	118500
Lose Yourself - Eminem	108002	107810
Bring Me To Life Evanescence	110559	111603
Clocks - Coldplay	108122	111125
Simply The Best - Tina Turner	100802	120612
Great Escape	100382	123019
ROCK MUSIC	**MONO**	**POLY**
Going Under- Evanescence	122505	123070
The Boys Of Summer - The Ataris	122485	124623
Bring Me To Life Evanescence	110559	111603
Did My Time - Korn	123328	121873
St Anger - Metallica	120383	120615
Faint - Linkin Park	112692	120216
The Anthem -Good Charlotte	110370	123074
Headstrong -Trapt	111160	N/A
She Hates Me -Puddle Of Mudd	102548	N/A
Sleeping Awake -P.O.D.	116230	N/A
Somewhere i Belong -Linkin Park	111021	111688
Times Like These - Foo Fighters	110059	107856
Minerva - Deftones	117180	117186
Mobscene - Marilyn Manson	116924	117261
Young & Hopeless -Good Charlotte	120300	N/A
Addicted To Love - R Palmer	111616	111514

TV & FILM	MONO	POLY
Airwolf	100621	108213
A Team	100682	107898
Axel F	100010	108195
Eye Of The Tiger	100687	108299
Friends	110615	108276
Good, Bad, Ugly	100689	108621
Friends	110615	108276
Halloween	100048	109159
The Hulk	101155	109167
Italian Job	100691	107026
Jackass	102708	117260
James Bond	100016	107023
Jaws	100764	109171
Lord Of The Rings	101158	108715
Mission Impossible	100142	107896
Miami Vice	101308	109117
Only Fools & Horses	101226	109069
Pulp Fiction	100695	108476
Raiders Of The Lost Ark	100126	109223
X Files	100160	109022
Simpsons	102191	107052
Terminator	101086	109255
RNB CHART	**MONO**	**POLY**
Hey Mama - Black Eyed Peas	149069	149074
If I Can't - 50 Cent	112700	126530
Baby I Love You- Jo Lopez	148923	144515
Yeah - Usher	148960	146155
The Way You Move - Outkast	125613	126028
Must Be Love-Fya	148626	148019
Dude - Beenie Man	148967	148628
Can't Get Enough - Raghav	149041	148014
She Wants To Move Nerd	N/A	148029
Fell In Love With A Boy - J Stone	148947	146259
Clubbin Marques Houston	149072	149077
Through The Wire - Kanye West	148988	146290
Another Day - Lemar	148360	146297
Badaboom - B2K Feat Fabolous	144374	N/A

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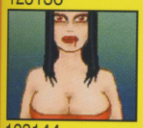
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skool wallpaper

NOKIA: 7650, 3650, 6600, 7210, 6610, 6100, 5100, 6200, 6800, 7250, 6220, 3300, 3100, 7250i, 3200 MOTOROLA T720, SHARP GX10,PANASONIC GD87, ERICSSON T68, T68i, T300, T610, P800, SAGEM MYX5.

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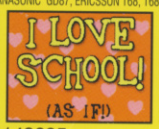

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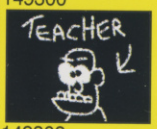

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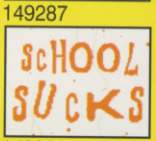

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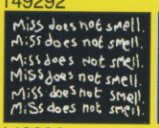

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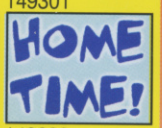

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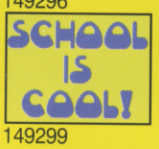

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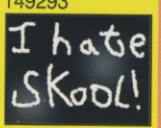

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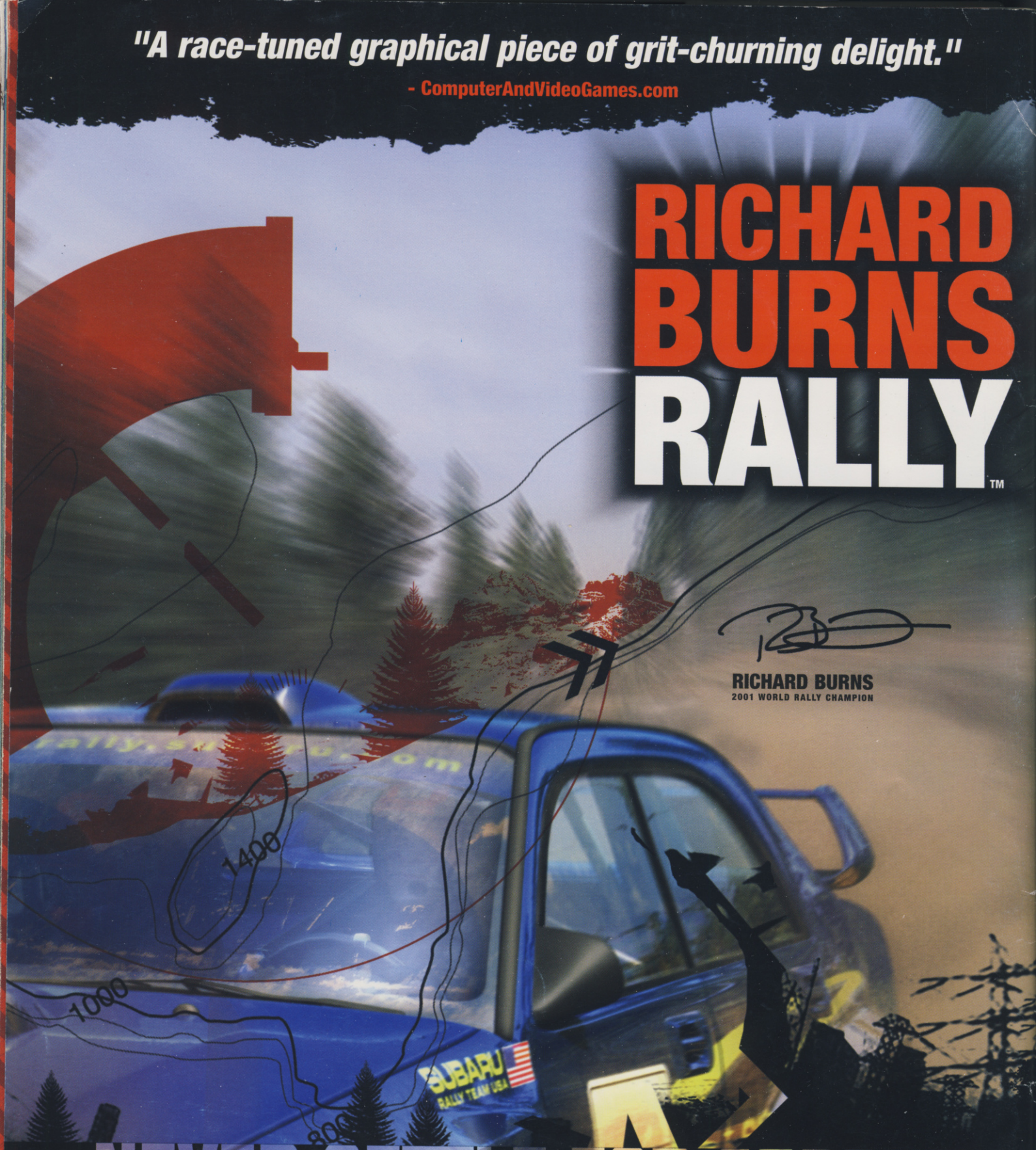

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